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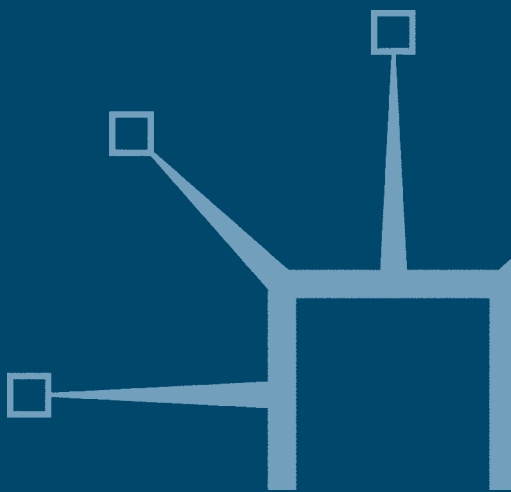
On World Politics

R.G. Collingwood, Michael Oakeshott and Neotraditionalism in International Relations

Alexander Astrov



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R.G. Collingwood

SM – *Speculum Mentis or the Map of Knowledge*
EPM – *An Essay on Philosophical Method*
PA – *The Principles of Art*
A – *An Autobiography*
EM – *An Essay on Metaphysics*
NL – *The New Leviathan or Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism*
IN – *The Idea of Nature*
IH – *The Idea of History*
EPP – *Essays in Political Philosophy*
GRU – Goodness, Rightness, Utility

Michael Oakeshott

EIM – *Experience and Its Modes*
R – *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*
OHC – *On Human Conduct*
VMS – The Vocabulary of Modern European State
MHC – On Misunderstanding Human Conduct: A Reply to My Critics
HCA – *Hobbes on Civil Association*
OH – *On History and Other Essays*
V – *The Voice of Liberal Learning*
HL – *Morality and Politics in Modern Europe: The Harvard Lectures*
RP – *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*
PF – *The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Scepticism*

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Notes on Usage

International Relations is capitalized when referring to the academic field of study. Once in lower case, it refers to the practices of the relations between human associations, not necessarily states.

Realism, Rationalism and Idealism are capitalized when referring to the schools of thought in philosophy. When in inverted commas, 'realism' and 'rationalism' refer to the 'traditions of thought' identified by the English school in International Relations. Otherwise, the terms refer to political doctrines and political theories associated with them.

Throughout the text, abbreviated references to Collingwood's and Oakeshott's works are given in parentheses, whereas works by other authors are referenced in full in the endnotes. Since neither Collingwood nor Oakeshott used the gender-neutral language, I refrain from using it as well.

1
Prologue

Responding to the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in New York, British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, diagnosed the situation: 'This is a moment to seize. The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world around us.'[1] Despite all the talk about the new war of the new millennium, which on the level of technology and military strategy this war soon turned out to be, the metaphor itself was familiar. Almost a century earlier, while preparing for the Peace Conference to be held in Paris so as to seize yet another opportunity provided by yet another disaster, General Smuts described the outcome of the Great War in similar terms: 'The very foundations have been shakened and loosened, and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck, and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march.'[2]

There is, however, what seems to be an important difference. By the end of the Paris Conference, Smuts had to admit: 'I am grieved beyond words that such should be the result of our statesmanship.'[3] In the immediate aftermath of September 11, Blair, invoking the 'power of community' as a remedy, came close to admitting that re-ordering the world may, on occasion, be beyond the power of the institution of statesmanship as such:

> Around the edge of the room, strangers making small talk, trying to be normal people in an abnormal situation. And as you crossed the room, you felt the longing and sadness; hands clutching photos of sons and daughters, wives and husbands; imploring you to believe them when they said there was still an outside chance of their loved ones being found alive, when you knew in truth that all hope was gone. And then a middle aged mother looks you in the eyes and tells

> you her only son has died, and asks you: why? I tell you: you do not feel like the most powerful person in the country at times like that.[4]

The gap between the ambition (re-ordering the world) and the means for its fulfilment (the state) points beyond isolated rhetorical gestures towards what Hannah Arendt described as 'one of the outstanding properties of the human condition' in her discussion of violence, where politics was placed into the context of a story of the transformation of impotence into omnipotence:

> Death, whether faced in actual dying or in the inner awareness of one's own mortality, is perhaps the most antipolitical experience there is. It signifies that we shall disappear from the world of appearances and shall leave the company of our fellow men, which are the conditions of all politics. As far as human experience is concerned, death indicates an extreme of loneliness and impotence. But faced collectively and in action, death changes its countenance; now nothing seems more likely to intensify our vitality than its proximity. Something we are usually hardly aware of, namely, that our own death is accompanied by the potential immortality of the group we belong to and, in the final analysis, of the species, moves into the centre of our experience. It is as though life itself, the immortal life of the species, nourished, as it were, by the sempiternal dying of its individual members, is 'surging upward', is actualized in the practice of violence.[5]

In Arendt's interpretation, it was 'the certainty of death that made men seek immortal fame in deed and word and that prompted them to establish a body politic which was potentially immortal. Hence, politics was precisely a means by which to escape from the equality before death into a distinction assuring some measure of deathlessness'.[6]

This story has its counterpart in International Relations where the potential deathlessness of the state is often presented as a reason behind the recurrence and repetition of the condition of international anarchy. States have no incentive to pursue absolute gains, be it perpetual peace or assured cooperation. What is puzzling is that the word 'politics' is still used in this context, albeit inconsistently. There are references to 'geopolitics', 'international politics', 'world politics' or 'politics among nations', as there are studies of 'order in world politics' and attempts to escape from this theoretical confusion of tongues by introducing 'the political'. What matters, of course, is not the word but rather the

availability of 'a means by which to escape from the equality before death' in a world divided into sovereign states; for it was this equality to which thousands of individuals were exposed on September 11 regardless of their nationality and also in blatant disregard of their own words or deeds. If 'politics' no longer offers this kind of refuge, then what does?

What I want to argue is that, in the words of R.G. Collingwood, we still have 'the means of living well in a disordered world' (EPP 174); that is, the means for being normal people in an abnormal situation, and that this resource is still 'politics', an activity once roughly defined by Michael Oakeshott as that of 'private persons (that is, persons without authority) negotiating with holders of offices of authority' (OHC 163). As such, this activity is different from diplomacy, balance of power, great-power management, war or international law. Nor can it be defined by a simple reference to something else:

> Politics is not religion, ethics, law, science, history or economics; it neither solves everything, nor is it present everywhere; and it is not any one political doctrine, such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, communism, or nationalism, though it can contain elements of most of these things. Politics is politics, to be valued as itself, not because it is 'like' or 'really is' something else more respectable or peculiar. Politics is politics. … Why call, for instance, a struggle for power 'politics' when it is only a struggle for power?[7]

What I also want to argue, is that there is a human activity which can be legitimately described as 'world politics' in the absence of a *cosmopolis* comparable to the state. Like any human activity, it has its conditions of possibility and limitations. The former are to be found in the interplay of 'international society' and 'world society', the latter are set by the operation of 'international system'. Although these three concepts have their origins in the English school of International Relations, my understanding of each of them and of the complex of activities constituted by the interplay of human relationships to which they refer, world order, is different from that of the 'classical' approach developed within this school. The main difference concerns not so much the nature, or the 'constitution', of world order, as the route by which I intend to arrive at its understanding, namely, by way of focusing on the activity of politics the character of which will be explored by drawing on Collingwood's and Oakeshott's ideas about it.

This view is closer to the so-called critical, rather than classical, approach insofar as it refuses to repeat the 'a state is a state is a state'

mantra and takes the following advice seriously: 'look at the problems of world order in the whole, but beware of reifying a world system. Beware of under-rating state power, but in addition give proper attention to social forces and processes and see how they relate to the development of states and world orders.'[8] Taking this advice seriously, however, means recognizing its own paradoxical character. Is it possible to address the problem of world order *as a whole* without any reification?

One can begin, for example, with the post-Heideggerian hermeneutics, putting to one side the epistemological travails of the knowing sovereign subject and concentrating instead on the question of 'the mode of being of that being that exists only in understanding'.[9] World order then would appear as a text in which various boundaries and practices are neither more nor less than inscriptions that, unlike more fleeting utterances of the face-to-face dialogical encounters, are potentially open for the investigation by anyone and not just the immediately present others. It would then seem possible to redefine the modern subject rather than to abandon it altogether:

> if it remains true that hermeneutics terminates in self-understanding, then the subjectivism of this proposition must be rectified by saying that to understand *oneself* is to understand oneself *in front of the text*. Consequently, what is appropriation from one point of view is disappropriation from another. To appropriate is to make what was alien become one's own. What is appropriated is indeed the matter of the text. But the matter of the text becomes my own only if I disappropriate myself, in order to make the matter of the text be. So I exchange the *me*, *master* of itself, for the *self*, *disciple* of the text.[10]

However, a subject whose identity is asserted *in front* of the world *confronts* the world and thus appears as estranged from the world. This distinctively modern subject acquires the possibility of having a world view at the expense of the experience of inhabiting a world thus viewed politically, at least in the sense in which the ancients practised the arts of their politics within the bounds of the *polis*: what used to be an arena for action becomes an object of either contemplation or technological exploitation. Nor is it possible to bring the 'world' and 'politics' together the way the moderns brought together politics and the state, for their interpretation was predicated on the state's monopoly on politics enjoyed in separation from society and became problematic the moment state and society began to penetrate each other: 'What had been up to that point affairs of state became thereby social matters, and,

vice versa, what had been purely social matters became affairs of state – as must necessarily occur in a democratically organized unit.'[11]

Perhaps, what caused the grief of General Smuts in the closing days of the Paris Conference was not the ineptitude of a particular set of statesmen, even less so the incompetence of the new great power, but the rise of what Heidegger described as the decisively modern 'gigantic' which manifested itself through the appearance on the scene, in quick succession, of total war, the totalitarian state and weapons of potentially total destruction, transforming the localized contests of the past into the battle of world views and, as far as politics was concerned, revealing itself in what Carl Schmitt still referred to in the late 1920s as only a polemical concept: the 'total state' which attempted to restore its monopoly on politics by denying any autonomy to such realms as religion, culture, education or economy. Now, in the aftermath of September 11, we still refuse to 'think at all if we believe we have explained this phenomenon of the gigantic with the catchword "Americanism" '.[12]

Insofar as the age of the world picture is also the age of science, it is hardly surprising that among its immediate reactions to the crises of the two World Wars was the establishment of academic departments meant to provide a systematic account of the world order. This engagement, however, soon brought about more frustrations than achievements. The mere scale of the subject involved assumptions even less warranted and abstractions even more violent than those that, already once applied to the state, often proved to be incompatible with the standards of good science, either natural or social. The gap between the ambition ('planning and calculating and adjusting and making secure'[13] on the global scale, that is, ordering the world picture) and the means for its fulfilment (science) only grew wider with the end of yet another battle of world views, the Cold War. The debates that followed saw a revival of interest both in Heidegger's reorientation of philosophy towards the question of the modality of being and also in a similar gesture attempted by Schmitt in political theory:

> It may be left open what the state is in its essence – a machine or an organism, a person or an institution, a society or a community, an enterprise or a beehive, or perhaps even a basic procedural order. These definitions and images anticipate too much meaning, interpretation, illustration, and construction, and therefore cannot constitute any appropriate point of departure for a simple and elementary statement. … All characteristics of [the state] receive their meaning from the further distinctive trait of the political and become incomprehensible when the nature of the political is misunderstood.[14]

'Revival' may seem to be a misplaced word in the context of International Relations. In fact, the founders of the discipline, so-called traditionalists, were castigated by the critics for their philosophical ineptitude and the discipline itself was presented as in need of re-introduction.[15] This criticism is itself disputable, if one concentrates not on the traditionalists' conclusions but rather on what was once described as their disposition to combine happily 'traditions and theories normally not able to relate to each other'.[16] This eclecticism resulted not so much from their theoretical unscrupulousness but from a rather desperate search for political alternatives, which at least some of them believed to be 'the justification for entering into the business of political philosophy to begin with' but which they also believed to be almost an impossibility 'in a hopeless political situation'.[17] Making such an argument properly would be a separate engagement in the history of ideas, partly already undertaken, chiefly with the aim of (re)drawing a distinction between the traditionalists and the rationalists who succeeded them.[18] What I want to indicate is another distinction, less obvious perhaps and certainly more ambiguous, between the classical approach and traditionalism.

At the heart of this distinction is the difference between the traditionalist concern with the 'autonomy of politics' and the classical focus on the 'nature of international society'.[19] The distinction is not watertight and one would be hard pressed if asked to box individual thinkers into one category or the other, not least because the two questions – What is politics? and What is political order? – are difficult to separate. Yet drawing this distinction may be a worthwhile engagement precisely when the order in question is that of a world turned into picture and thus made hostile to political action and therefore political theorizing. It will further gain in importance if viewed in the context of established theoretical traditions transcending the confines of a separate discipline. On the one side of this conditional divide, it is possible to locate thinkers, heavily indebted to the Continental tradition of political theorizing, for whom politics (often under the name of 'diplomacy') was a means by which to respond to the claims of 'absolute war' (Raymond Aron), revolutionary drive for 'absolute security' (Henry Kissinger) or the hegemonic subordination of politics to ethics already conflated with economics (E.H. Carr). On the other, one is likely to find those who, in line with the British tradition of pluralism, which never placed much stress on the state/society distinction to begin with, tended to understand the state as one association among others and did not assign to politics any special status. Characteristically, the latter are especially

concerned with distinguishing themselves from the 'realism' of Hobbes for which purpose Grotian 'rationalism' (conspicuously similar to Humean empiricism) is postulated as an alternative.

This is where Collingwood and Oakeshott enter the picture. Unmistakeably English in their theorizing, both are open to 'foreign' influences; both reach out to Hobbes and his 'absolutist' vision of politics which they place into the context of a radically pluralist conception of human experience generally. What emerges out of such bringing together of 'traditions and theories normally not able to relate to each other' is an idea of politics as a mode of mediation short of which, according to Collingwood, there are 'not so many independent political agents, as the pluralist thinks, but so many warring factions, whose mutual hostility only serves to show that none of them has risen to the level of political action' (EPP 108).

Unlike Schmitt, who, having defined the political, mapped it back, as it were, onto actually existing states, Collingwood, having raised the question of the location of the 'absolute state', whose duty it is to mediate between the conflicting interests of the various associations, responded as follows: 'On earth, certainly; yet not visible in the outward form of parliaments and kings' (106). Like Schmitt, Oakeshott was interested in disentangling Hobbes the natural scientist from Hobbes the artist.[20] But whereas Schmitt's understanding of politics culminates in the decision on exception/exclusion so that Hobbesian 'silence of the law' emerges as a rupture in the rule-governed 'everydayness' of the bureaucratic routine, Oakeshottian 'poetry' appears as the critical ideal intrinsic to the day-to-day customary conduct. It is true that 'a rule of life (unless the life has been simplified by the drastic reduction of the variety of situations which are allowed to appear) will always be found wanting unless it is supplemented with an elaborate casuistry or hermeneutic' (R 473). It is also true that such casuistry alienates one from 'a world dizzy with moral ideals' in which the more one thinks about conduct the less one knows 'how to behave in public or in private' (481), so that the dominant disposition of the age becomes that of prosaic regularity (479). Yet all this calls not for the denial of rules, ideals or criticism in favour of 'organic' custom, but rather, as always in practice, for a choice. This choice is not between thinking and acting, nor even between knowing-what and knowing-how, but between knowing in advance what ought to be done in any conceivable situation and knowing how to think when acting.

Thus, although the traditionalism I have in mind may indeed be distinguished from the classical approach by its stronger emphasis on the

manner of ordering the world, as opposed to the 'classical' concern with the world's order, the two cannot be separated unconditionally. But if some confrontation with the world indeed constitutes, at least in part, the reality in which we live, then 'all efforts to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain'.[21] And in this sense, the 'neotraditionalism' that I have in mind is different from the classical (or 'neo-classical') approach with its tacit by-passing of the present by way of projecting a distant medieval past, for example, into an uncertain 'neo-medieval' future.[22]

If this is a negative outline of neotraditionalism, then positively it asserts the availability of tradition as an experience which brings together custom and criticism, action and contemplation, in which the distinctively modern 'conviction that everything that happens on earth must be comprehensible to man' capable of re-ordering the world is transformed into comprehension proper, as 'the unpremeditated, attentive facing up to, and resisting of, reality – whatever it may be'.[23] The only assurance there may be of the existence of such a tradition is a certain kind of political imagination. This is what I want to explore by following the work of Collingwood and Oakeshott.

This focus of attention implies a certain 'method'. I approach Collingwood and Oakeshott with the questions arising from contemporary International Relations: What is politics? What is tradition? What is the connection between the two? Both Collingwood and Oakeshott were clearly interested in these questions themselves. What distinguishes their discussion of them from those of the classical approach is that they explore them in relation to human experience generally. So it is this specific relation, and the view of experience presupposed in it, that I focus on. In doing so, I shall not approach Collingwood's and Oakeshott's arguments by establishing their location either vis-à-vis some ascertained development in the history of political thought to which they were responding, or similar arguments advanced by others, with whose work Collingwood and Oakeshott themselves were not familiar. Although this kind of research is indispensable for the understanding of any past thinker, fortunately, it is already underway elsewhere. Drawing on the work already done in this manner, I shall concentrate on the comparison between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's political philosophies.

Drawing on the rapidly growing and highly heterogeneous body of interpretation is anything but straightforward. Here the nuances of meaning are subtle and numerous, disagreements are real and often

illuminating. Nevertheless, for the most part, I deliberately abstain from discussing the Collingwood and Oakeshott scholarship; not in disregard of its undeniable achievements, but for the sake of a clearer focus on what, I believe, may contribute to the understanding of world politics. Thus, there is no way of avoiding the discussion of Collingwood's and Oakeshott's views of experience generally, their conceptualizations of the state or human subjectivity altogether, but it is possible to gloss over certain contested issues in the interpretations of those so as to get to the question which, as far as I can see, remains on the margins of these interpretations, not least because it remained on the margins of Collingwood's and Oakeshott's own attention: the question of world order and the place of political action within it.

Again, here one can argue that in recent years the unpublished writings of Collingwood and Oakeshott were, one way or another, brought to the attention of the reading public, and some of this work directly addresses the question of interstate relations. Collingwood's work on anthropology or Oakeshott's writings on the post-Second World War settlement most readily come to mind. In my view, these writings interestingly illustrate Collingwood's and Oakeshott's general ideas about political order, as these are expressed in *The New Leviathan* and *On Human Conduct*, but do not modify them in any significant sense. Meanwhile, if one's primary interest lies in the field of International Relations, one is tempted to admit that, since its inception as an academic discipline, it never lacked in perceptive 'anatomy lessons', the 'skill in detecting the essence of specific situations', especially so in the case of the discipline's 'traditionalists'; what has always been in shorter supply is a conceptual 'roadmap' which, *without abandoning the idea of the distinct, and in that autonomous, sphere of political action*, does not define 'the states as the only actors on the world scene', does not make 'of military power the decisive currency' and does not see 'the hierarchy of military might as *the* hierarchy in the international system'.[24] Collingwood's and Oakeshott's political philosophies offer just this, but they do so on the conceptual level, and this is the level I try to stay at throughout.

Given the task at hand, I read both *The New Leviathan* and *On Human Conduct* as an elaboration of Hobbes' political philosophy. Yet, unlike many International Relations theorists, both Collingwood and Oakeshott read Hobbes not as a philosopher of power but that of authority. For both, however, political authority (or the lack of it) is the problem under the conditions of late modernity rather than a solution. In their search for a viable authoritative context, both turn to the idea of tradition.

Here the difference is most explicit and hinges upon the interplay of history and practice as two distinct world of ideas. This is not to say that Collingwood and Oakeshott are taken to be the philosophers of history and practice respectively.[25] It is precisely because both are clearly aware of the manifold character of human life, while attending to its totality differently, that the difference between their ideas highlights the difference between history and practice itself as a specific human experience which exists in excess of either historical or practical understanding. The task, then, consists in locating this peculiar experience and re-defining tradition and politics by reference to it. Inasmuch as this search for an alternative in what seems to be an exceedingly cluttered situation echoes the initial disposition of International Relations traditionalism, it is neotraditionalist. Insofar as tradition thus understood is one possible ground for the deliberation of the overall conditions of world order, it is the ground for the activity of world politics.

The argument proceeds as follows. I first outline some of the theoretical debates surrounding the classical approach and then, by way of introduction, locate my own argument within them. In doing so, I identify four themes – politics, poetry, civilization and tradition – that structure my discussion of Collingwood and Oakeshott. In subsequent chapters, I examine each of them individually. Throughout this examination, contemporary International Relations remain mostly in the background of my attention. Although the relations of states do provide a theorist with a specific focus of attention, there are no modalities of thinking appropriate exclusively for this realm of human experience, and my concern is with the latter. The exact character of this concern in its relation to world politics is discussed towards the end of the book, as 'neotraditionalism in International Relations', where I argue that tradition intimates the experience of 'escape' from one set of conditions into another, and to remain a meaningful human experience, it cannot be associated either with the alleged pre-historical homogeneity of the pre-modern world or with the initial traditionalist understanding of statesmanship as a 'tragic-heroic' practice in the service of history.

2
Another Case for The Classical Approach

In this book, I outline an idea of world politics as a distinct activity of thinking and speaking about the conditions of world order in terms of their desirability. World order is understood not as an arrangement of entities, be they humans, states or civilizations, but a complex of variously situated activities, including individuals as members of diverse associations of their own. This idea is advanced from within one such association, or context, contemporary International Relations, wherein it entails a theoretical position, neotraditionalism, as a rectification of the initial, 'traditionalist' or 'classical', approach after the advance of rationalism and subsequent reflectivist critique.

By now, the classical approach has survived so many different cases against it that such theoretical resilience itself appears as a puzzle.[1] Is it due to the validity of the 'classical' insights into the realities of international society? Or is it rather the case that this school of thought turns out to be theoretically unsinkable because so much in its account of these realities is put to one side as unthinkable, located in the realm of judgement as 'a rough and ready observation, of a sort for which there is no room in logic or strict science'?[2]

The latter reading is insisted upon by those critics who argue that, despite its awareness of the work of Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, R.G. Collingwood or Michael Oakeshott, the classical approach could not master their language and turned it into its own 'hidden, ignored, or marginalized discursive dimension that speaks it but which it cannot speak'.[3] To put it in Collingwood's terms, this language constituted the absolute, that is, unarticulated and therefore unquestioned, presupposition of the classical approach, preventing it from bringing its mode of inquiry into line with its understanding of the subject-matter. And while subject 'without style is barbarism, style without subject is dilettantism'

(EM 299). This may have something to do with the traditional English aversion to metaphysics. The difficulty it poses is not that the school's conceptions of international system, international society and world society do actually 'depend on metaphysics as such, but that they depend on, and work to affirm, a very restricted repertoire of metaphysical possibilities, while pleading innocence of all metaphysical responsibilities and thus of all responsibility'.[4]

On a more generous reading, the English school was concerned with the metaphysical foundations of international society from the outset, although the exact nature of this concern remained by and large obscure. Thus, in the aftermath of the Second World War, Herbert Butterfield referred to the 'imponderables' of human conduct as 'the most essential aspect of an international order – the one thing that cannot be recovered by the mere drafting of a paper code'.[5] Something of this kind is implied also in Hedley Bull's contention that order 'among mankind as a whole is something wider than order among states; something more fundamental and primordial than it; and also … something morally prior to it'.[6] Similarly, on the level of theory, Martin Wight was concerned not with a lack of theories *of* international relations but with the absence of International Theory, as a unifying tradition that would somehow make particular theories hang together.[7] Bull's 'case for the classical approach' can also be read as an argument for such a unifying tradition. If judgement is required both in practice and in theory, then judgement itself can be exercised only from within some already structured context.

But where was such a context to be found (if at all) and what was the exact character of its relation (if any) to politics? There were roughly three distinct but interlocking answers to this question, two 'traditionalist' and one 'scientific'.

The first asserted that all ideational, including ideal, frameworks were the outcome of politics, while politics unfolded in history as a struggle for power (recognition). Accordingly, 'a coherent structure of hypotheses that will provide a common explanation' of international political phenomena was to be acquired through historical interpretation.[8] However, to be consistent, such 'realism' postulated a conception of history (and politics) as an infinite process and thus contradicted the finite character of humans and human action, excluding 'four things which appear to be essential ingredients of all effective political thinking: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgement and a ground for action'.[9] Not surprisingly, some form of universality was expected to be disclosed in history, be it the 'Aristotelian truth that man is a political animal',[10]

'the ultimate experience of life and death, national existence and national extinction', pointing towards political theology,[11] or that very rupture between 'two elements – utopia and reality – belonging to two different planes which can never meet'.[12] Put differently, all action was to be understood rationally by drawing on history, but historical understanding itself culminated in the ordeal of 'tragic' undecidability, most visible perhaps in international relations exceptionally adverse towards rationalistic engineering and therefore offering a unique entry-point into the genuinely political experience. Political action consisted in some form of encounter with this tragedy: history was to be attended to through reason but was not modelled on reason itself.

This conclusion of the first 'traditionalist' response served as a starting point for the second. Here the unhesitating Christian acceptance of experience other than historical was seen as the condition of possibility for historical understanding in the first place.[13] The proponents of the first approach understood history as the scene of an incessant struggle for power and concentrated on the institutional containers of this power, while admitting that these might change throughout history. The advocates of the second were deeply suspicious of all institutions, including the Church, and saw their last (earthly) resort in the Christian 'zeal for personalities as such'.[14] For the first set of traditionalists, what revealed itself at the limits of reason was the despair of human tragedy. For the second, rational conduct verged on the regions of hope 'beyond tragedy', marked with forgiveness and the *agape* of Christ, which were believed to be present in the structure of human life, even if they were manifestly absent from the conduct of individual humans or institutions.[15] Ethics had clear priority over politics, even though it was not expected to guide politics directly, while international relations offered specific opportunities for the exercise of Christian virtues. When exposed to the radical foreignness, we are also confronted with our own 'Blimpishness': 'We may listen how the African himself makes his explanations, and we still may not understand, because we are unable to feel with him – we do not give something of ourselves in order to achieve real apprehension'.[16]

Finally, the third response, while not denying the existence of experience inaccessible to reason, declared it to be irrelevant for any political theorizing: 'Even if some matters of concern to international politics are profoundly philosophical, not all are', and the non-philosophical remainder is always amenable for scientific treatment.[17] This opportunity, however, came at a price. If history-oriented traditionalists were ambivalent about the possibility of any genuine change in the structure

of international relations, 'theological' ones could not rule it out in principle: 'It is always possible … that a return to the first principles of our religion will once again precipitate upon the world a new thing'.[18] Rationalists assumed that the history of international relations did not change over the millennia. Accordingly, politics was understood either as individualist manœuvring within a given order or as the immutable governing principle of this order, 'anarchy'. In becoming increasingly scientific, rationalists had to leave behind not only the question of change, but some of the discipline's 'traditional' fields, such as political statesmanship or ethics.[19]

When 'a new thing' (at least by the standards of rationalism) did happen, in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, International Relations encountered an uprising of its own. Labelled 'reflectivist', it challenged rationalism on a wide range of issues, but two, 'identity' and 'politics', clearly stood out.

As far as politics is concerned, reflectivist claims can be abridged as follows. Every 'interpretation of political events, no matter how deeply it is sunk in a specific historical context or how high the pile of data upon which it sits, contains an ontopolitical dimension'; that is, it 'invokes a set of fundaments about the necessities and possibilities of human being, about, for instance, the forms into which humans may be composed and the possible relations humans can establish with nature'.[20] Once conscious of this ontological dimension and actively engaged in the pursuit of its intimations, political action is always in excess of existing order, aiming at 'out-living' the order of modernity rather than 'living-out' its technological project.[21] This character of political action is rooted in 'the excessive, unacknowledged kernel' of the modern subject, 'which is far from the pacifying image of the transparent [rational] Self'.[22] To distinguish political action commensurate with this excess from the routine of technological politics, it can be labelled 'the political' and will have to do 'with the establishment of that very social order which sets out a particular, historically specific account of what counts as politics and defines other areas of life as *not* politics'.[23]

Although reflectivists saw rationalism as their main target, important differences existed between them and traditionalists. In the case of politics, these revolved around the issue of its 'autonomy'. Traditionalists understood the autonomy of politics in terms of the place of politics amidst other human activities. Politics was supposed to be appropriate for states rather than firms, for statesmen rather than lawyers, to be different from economics or ethics. For reflectivists, any such differentiation requires a prior rethinking of difference itself, just as 'international' or

'intersubjective' requires rethinking 'the operation of the "inter" – the very relationality – which gives subjects definition'.[24] The political, far from being everything that is going on in international relations, can be found anywhere without losing its ontological dimension. It presents itself not at some established locality but in every gesture of locating, allocating, localizing, territorializing.

Here I demur. The problem is neither with the critique of rationalism nor with the analysis of the political. What I find questionable is the reflectivist surrender of politics. Is it possible to think politics as distinguished from both the political of reflectivism and the policy of rationalism? Or rather, why is it necessary to think politics in this manner?

My argument, as an answer to this question, is that, although any ordering and any interpretation of order involve an 'account of what counts as politics and defines other areas of life as *not* politics', this account itself does not have to be invariably political. Politics is meaningful as a specific encounter with a specific kind of order, and in that, to put it in traditionalist terms, it is 'autonomous'. This autonomy does not warrant the possibility of thinking politics in separation from its ontological dimension, but rather stands in the way of any premature projection of certain ontologies ('the ultimate experience of life and death', for example) onto specific institutional arrangements ('national existence and national extinction').

Although this insistence on the autonomy of politics is what makes my argument 'neotraditionalist', the 'neotraditionalism' I have in mind has nothing to do with any attempts at tracing a middle-way between rationalism and reflectivism. The route I take within reflectivism can be described as running 'always to the sea / 'Twixt duty and delight' (OHC 324). These lines, paraphrased in many an English sermon, were cited by Oakeshott towards the end of *On Human Conduct*, where their context is no longer religious but philosophical. In this context, 'duty' and 'delight' refer to what I take to be important themes in Collingwood's and Oakeshott's political theories. Through them both traditionalist answers, 'historicist' and 'theological', to the question of 'the most essential aspect of an international order', tradition, can be re-read as pointing towards the 'fundaments about the necessities and possibilities of human being' invoked in every interpretation of any order.

Collingwood's and Oakeshott's interpretations invoke 'progressive anti-metaphysics' and 'forswearing of metaphysics' respectively. I now want to indicate four nodal points in the exploration of these interpretations: politics, poetry, civilization and tradition. None will be examined comprehensively at this point. The task is to show how they are related.

Politics

From the prologue to his first major book, *Speculum Mentis*, published in 1924, to the preface to *The New Leviathan* written in 1942, shortly before his death, Collingwood maintained that the sole task of philosophy consisted in helping individuals to become 'whole of heart and secure in their grasp on life' (SM 35), under conditions hardly propitious, when, forced to 'blow away the mists of [the interwar] sentimentalism', they found themselves with no guidelines or guidance as to what to live for (NL lx). The task of philosophy was to provide 'the means of living well in a disordered world' (EPP 174) which made philosophy not only thoroughly political but also 'world-political'. Oakeshott suggested something similar: 'Probably there has been no theory of the nature of the world, of the activity of man, of the destiny of mankind, no theology or cosmology, perhaps even no metaphysics, that has not sought a reflection of itself in the mirror of political philosophy; certainly there has been no fully considered politics that has not looked for its reflection in eternity' (HCA 5).

Yet there was a difference. Although Oakeshott's thinking was more explicitly focused on politics than that of Collingwood and, as he admitted on a number of occasions, this theme had been with him nearly as long as he could remember (OHC vii), his first major contribution to political philosophy came only in 1946, when he was already in his mid-forties, in the form of the introduction to *Leviathan*, where he pauses to discuss the similar riddle of Hobbes' late start and distinguishes between those philosophers who 'allow us to see the workings of their minds' and those, like Hobbes, in whose writing 'nothing is in progress; there is no promise, only fulfilment', suggesting that this assertive finality was due not only to Hobbes' personality but also his context, the 'tradition of Will and Artifice' (HCA 8–10). It is also interesting to note his later admission that, for the most part, he himself had 'gone slowly in order to avoid being flustered' (OHC vii), and to compare it to Henry Jones' report on Collingwood's manuscript reviewed for Macmillan, in 1918:

> I do not know any writer more frank. He cares not one whit to what extent he exposes his flanks to his critics, and makes statements which, taken by themselves, look either purely absurd or preposterously untrue. But that is only one side: on the other is the fact that these statements are *stages* or *steps* in the development of his main argument, half truths or sheer errors in which it is not possible to rest and which just compel a movement onwards to a wider truth. (EPP 232)

This comparison leads farther than just to the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's personalities or the identity of their attempts at approximating their style of writing to the character of their inquiries. It points at the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's situatedness vis-à-vis the (British) Hegelian tradition, and in fact, raises questions as to their belonging to this tradition. These questions revolve around the interplay of 'fulfilment' and 'progress' and lead to two different locations of politics on the map of human experience generally.

In Collingwood's account of the evolution of political theory, the Platonic *polis* is different from the Hobbesian state, and yet, in some respect, they are the same. The sameness is not that of a 'universal' of which both entities are instances but of a 'historical process, and the difference is the difference between one thing which in the course of that process has turned into something else, and the other thing into which it has turned' (A 61–2). At the same time, Collingwood's understanding of historical process puts on one side the possibility of locating the driving force of history, either in the form of God, Nature or Reason, outside human life (IH 116–17). History is the self-knowledge of the mind which can be experienced only through concrete exhibitions of human intelligence.

The same move displaces the state from the central position assigned to it by Hegel. In Collingwood's reading, Hegel unwittingly accepted the Kantian contention that all history was political history. For Kant, it was grounded in his distinction between moral action, as the thing-in-itself, and political action, as its phenomenal manifestation. Having repudiated the underlying distinction between phenomena and things-in-themselves, Hegel should have arrived at the idea of history as 'the history of absolute mind, i.e. art, religion, and philosophy' (121). Collingwood's further reformulation of this logic suggests that all history is the history of thought and as such the highest form of the self-knowledge of the mind available. Philosophy is not an attempt to know beyond the limits of experience but is 'primarily at any given time an attempt to discover what the people of that time believe about the world's general nature. … Secondarily, it is the attempt to discover the corresponding presuppositions of other peoples and other times, and to follow the historical process by which one set of presuppositions has turned into another' (A 66).

In fact, these presuppositions are never made explicitly by those who are guided by them. This is why they are 'absolute' and can be discovered only historically. Nevertheless, at any given moment, while being

engaged with a particular subject-matter, one can reject the absolute presuppositions currently governing philosophy because these become open for questioning by the investigation of this subject-matter. This would be the case of 'progressive anti-metaphysics'. Alternatively, one can reject philosophy because its presuppositions embarrassingly throw into question one's own, dogmatic, understanding of the subject-matter; 'reactionary anti-metaphysics'. Finally, one can reject metaphysics because one rejects any systematic engagement with any subject-matter thus rejecting science and with it the idea of progress; 'irrational anti-metaphysics' (EM 83–100).

Rationalist foreclosing on the philosophical dimension of politics would represent a brand of reactionary anti-metaphysics best illustrated by a historical example. The nineteenth century conducted its international politics in accordance with political theories developed on the basis of the absolute presuppositions of the eighteenth century. What the eighteenth century itself could not theorize was 'nationality', conceived as 'natural', exempt from change and therefore from philosophical questioning. The nineteenth century came to understand 'nationality' as making history 'because history has made nationality and is constantly destroying and remaking it'. Those, in the nineteenth century, who 'wanted to go on practising the political arts of the eighteenth century' were sheltering 'behind the cry "No More Metaphysics" in order to kill and destroy with good conscience as the obsolete metaphysics of the eighteenth century bade them' (EM 99). Progressive anti-metaphysics, by contrast, would call for a rapprochement between theory and practice or, which is now the same thing, between practice and history.

In *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott distances himself from Hegel on the same issue but in a different manner, starting with the point that, in his reading of Hegel, history is moved neither by an 'impersonal "force" loose in the universe' nor by Reason, but 'a procedure of "criticism" (dialectic)' which, 'if it may be said to exist anywhere', exists 'in the characters, the adventures, the works, and the relations of human beings' (OHC 257). The adventures of free-willing persons always overflow the locality of their immediate field of action, resulting in the intimation of an overall context to which all these localities belong. In practice, this context is not a historical process but a constellation of the considerations of right conduct recognized, first, as 'a manifold of considerations instrumental to the satisfaction of wants, whatever they may be', and further, as 'a system of known, positive, self-authenticating, non-instrumental rules of law' (261). The former of these understandings Oakeshott presents as 'instrumental practice', and human association in terms of such practice

(Hegelian 'civil society') as 'enterprise association'. The latter understanding becomes 'moral practice', and association in its terms (Hegelian 'state') 'civil association'.

The reason for such redefinition lay in Oakeshott's misgivings about Hegel's interrelated understandings of the state and history. In accordance with Hegelian metaphysics, an association in terms of the recognition of the non-instrumental rules of law could not be deduced by thought from the mere existence of free-willing individuals 'unless there existed in the world some actual intimation of it' (262). This Hegel found in the European state emerging in the wake of the French Revolution. The emergence of such states also had to be part of progressive historical development so that its recognition through the procedure of criticism could count for an advance in human self-understanding and thus an advance in human freedom. Hegel's account of history was an account of the development of European political institutions towards the idea of the state, and it 'was based upon the belief that the human self-recognition implicit in this mode of association was an already recognizable (though yet incomplete) historic achievement' (263).

This belief appears to be somewhat far-fetched when assessed against what the evidence obliges us to believe. Further, this evidence, invariably located in the practical present, cannot possibly warrant any conclusions about the historical past. Historical understanding, as any other homogeneous abstract world of ideas, owes its basic presuppositions to something beyond itself, but certainly not to the world of practice. What is presupposed is history's ability to identify its individuals/events under the category of the past. Without such presupposition no historical understanding would be possible, but it can be neither made nor questioned by history itself: 'History begins with a world of presupposed individuals, but in the attempt to make it coherent, to make it more of a world, there is a constant temptation to abandon the terms of the presupposition. … Historical experience, like all abstract experience, is always on the verge of passing beyond itself' (EIM 122).

Thus, whereas Collingwood calls for the enlargement of the scope of historical inquiry, Oakeshott attempts to establish its limits. For Collingwood, philosophy is approximated to history, that of the absolute presuppositions, and historical understanding becomes the mode of inquiry appropriate not only for history or practice but also for science. For Oakeshott, what we acquired historically is the recognition of the conditionality of the various modes of experience, such as science, practice or history, but also a disposition to accept the *differentia* of each

of these universes of discourse and to resist any suggestion that 'all human utterance is in one mode' (R 488).

Each mode of inquiry involves *scientia* as a systematic attempt at knowing. But what one is trying to know by way of an inquiry which is 'practical' or 'historical' is different from what one attempts to know 'scientifically', precisely because, historically, mankind have acquired a plurality of languages in which to express the various images of experience, each governed by a set of presuppositions of its own, each attempting and failing to meet the ultimate test of thinking: 'For me the end of all experience is to distinguish individuality' (EIM 151).[25] So the method of 'science' is not given or fixed once and for all, and its practitioners may well come to understand both the activity itself and its data as having histories. Yet, the way things stand, this does not abrogate the character of 'science' as an activity concerned with a world in which, ideally, everything is independent from our practical desires and aversions and can be measured 'according to agreed scales' so that all measurements can be unambiguously communicated to everyone who takes the trouble of entering into the nature of the agreement (504–8). In this manner, 'science', no less than 'history' or 'practice', is only a voice in the overall constellation of discourses, the 'conversation of mankind'. Any rapprochement between history and practice is possible, if at all, only in the form of conversation, not an argument, in which the identity of both practice and history would be preserved.

Poetry

To put it all differently, both Collingwood and Oakeshott accept the post-Kantian prohibition on presupposing experience in its totality while admitting that without some such presupposition no practical reasoning would be possible. The question is in what manner this presupposition is to be understood. Collingwood's and Oakeshott's answers to this question – history and conversation – lead to further questioning as far as practice is concerned. Is there any meaningful criterion of current conduct? This question only gains in importance once naturalistic understanding of practice is ruled out:

> If we want to abolish capitalism or war, and in doing so not only to destroy them but to bring into existence something better, we must begin by understanding them: seeing what the problems are which our economic or international system succeeds in solving, and how the solution of these is related to the other problems which it fails to

> solve. … It may be impossible to do this; our hatred of the thing we are destroying may prevent us from understanding it, and we may love it so much that we cannot destroy it unless we are blinded by such hatred. But if that is so, there will once more, as so often in the past, be change but no progress; we shall have lost our hold on one group of problems in our anxiety to solve the next. And we ought by now to realize that no kindly law of nature will save us from the fruits of our ignorance. (IH 334)

Collingwood's conception of truth is closely related to his reform of metaphysics: 'Whether a given proposition is true or false, significant or meaningless, depends on what question it was meant to answer; and any one who wishes to know whether a given proposition is true or false, significant or meaningless, must find out what question it was meant to answer' (EM 39). From this an idea of scientific progress follows directly: 'Progress in science would consist in the suppression of one theory by another which served both to explain all that the first theory explained, and also to explain types or classes of events or "phenomena" which the first ought to have explained but could not' (IH 332).

This, however, holds only with regard to that conception of science which presupposes some agreement on the procedures for measurement, whereas the nature of this agreement itself can be discovered only historically. Things get more complicated in historical research, for historians often cannot agree on, or remain ignorant of, the questions that various ages were facing. The distinction between 'enlightened' and 'dark' periods in history is only a distinction between historical periods illuminated by our own understanding of them through re-enactment and those that are not. While assessing social progress, one is confronted with further difficulties. It is impossible to measure progress by the increase in the production of certain goods, for example, without knowing how this increase affected the whole way of life of a given community, and entering into an understanding of such a whole is beyond re-enactment, however rigorous (324–7).

In his pre-Second World War writings, Collingwood begins to examine art, including folk-art, as a way of precipitating 'a new (and better) thing' upon the world:

> We need not buy revolvers and rush off to do something drastic. What we are concerned with is the threatened death of civilization. That has nothing to do with my death or yours, or the deaths of any people we can shoot before they shoot us. It can be neither arrested nor hastened

> by violence. Civilizations die and are born not with waving of flags or the noise of machine-guns in the streets, but in the dark, in the stillness, when no one is aware of it. It never gets into the papers. Long afterwards, a few people, looking back, begin to see that it has happened.
>
> Then let us get back to our business. We … are … interested in art. We live in a world where most of what goes by that name is amusement. Here is our garden. It seems to need cultivating. (PA 103–4)

At least in part, Collingwood's interest in art in that period, as well as his interest in anthropology, archaeology, psychoanalysis and 'the idea of nature' more generally, may be read as reflecting his search for some form of meaningful non-linguistic (but not non-discursive) experience that could be reconciled with historical understanding. However, in at least two respects, his understanding of art remains historicist. First, artistic creation is understood as converting emotions into ideas and thus mirrors the progressive character of the self-knowledge of the mind. Second, in the final analysis, artistic experience is relational, it is action, not contemplation, which 'is not concerned with dateless realities lodged in some metaphysical heaven' (323). In artistic imagination and expression, the pursuit of truth does culminate on the pre-relational level of consciousness which recognizes only concrete individuality. Yet, insofar as artistic experience is language, for its audience it presents a practical diagnosis of a shared situation, the corruption of consciousness, even when it offers an image of 'an evil not curable by shooting capitalists or destroying a social system, a disease which has so eaten into civilization that political remedies are about as useful as poulticing a cancer' (335–6). To become a remedy, poetic image, insofar as 'it is the poetry of a thinking man and addressed to a thinking audience', should be recognized not merely 'as expressing the intellectual emotion attendant upon thinking in a certain way' but also the 'intellectual emotion attendant upon trying to think better'. The latter disposition is that of philosophy. As with Collingwood's understanding of truth generally, trying to think better is not to expound a system, but to arrive at it, while the only way of arriving anywhere is by building up 'arguments whose purpose is to criticize other philosophical views' arrived at in the past; that is, again, to think historically (297).

Oakeshott, even when in his most sceptical moods, as in the following piece written at the peak of the Cold War, never denied the existence of meaningful criteria for the evaluation of social practices:

> If one looks around the world today, the overheated imagination can find dozens of reasons for dismay, but if anything is certain it is that

> the collapse of our civilization will not come from any of the things which get into the headlines – not even from soil erosion. … When what a man can get from the use and control of the natural world and his fellow men is the sole criterion of what he thinks he needs, there is no hope that the major part of mankind will find anything but good in this exploitation until it has been carried far enough to reveal its bitterness to the full. This … is not an argument for doing nothing, but it is a ground for not allowing ourselves to be comforted by the prospect, or even the possibility, of a revolution. The voyager in these waters is ill advised to weigh himself down with such heavy baggage; what he needs are things that will float with him when he is shipwrecked. (V 109–10)

The ending suggests the existence of the 'right' things to cling to, as an alternative to conduct driven by the criterion of use and control, and it is to poetry that Oakeshott assigns a special position throughout his career. The exact character of this position, however, changes significantly. In *Experience*, poetry is the highest expression of practice. In 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind' this view is retracted: poetry is 'a dream within the dream of life; a wild flower planted among our wheat' (R 541). What exactly is meant by 'among' here?

In conversation, 'Each voice is at once a manner of speaking and a determinate utterance'. Ideally, the manner of speaking and the utterance made in this manner cannot be separated. An utterance taken on its own and presented as a conclusion valid independently of the manner in which it was reached becomes a dogma. A manner of speaking presented as being appropriate for everyone is appropriate for speaking only to oneself, and when an attempt is made to impose one such manner onto the conversation, 'barbarism may be observed to have supervened' (492). Poetry is an activity in which it is impossible to separate the manner of speaking from what is being said. As an example of such unity, or authenticity, it plays the same role in Oakeshott's philosophy as the state did for Hegel: an actually existing intimation of human experience which is not really a 'mode', because the unity of poetic image is not distorted, modified through theoretical abstraction. Unlike the Hegelian unity of experience which is, first, philosophically assumed and then shown to be brought into existence through historical progress, Oakeshottian poetry is always in place as a historic achievement, and what is intimated in this achievement is not a future absolute redemption but a possibility of the current enjoyment of the ideal of absolute conversability.

What, however, is the place of poetry? Inasmuch as poetry is an instance of contemplation which does not point to anything outside

itself and in this sense remains presuppositionless as far as experience as a whole is concerned, it can be found neither in any of the universes of discourse, nor in philosophy as a 'parasitic activity' that 'springs from the conversation, … but … makes no specific contribution to it' (R 491). In practice, for example, as one universe of discourse, an utterance or a deed purporting to be poetic slips into fabrication, abandoning its 'practical' character of performance as the pursuit of imagined and wished-for outcomes sought in the responses of others (OHC 35–6). Were philosophy to be modelled on poetry, it would have abandoned its character of inquiry into the presuppositions of the individual universes of discourse and their overall constellation. The only way, then, to find the place of poetry is to take Oakeshott's location of it as 'a dream within the dream of *life*' literally, while accepting that there is more to life than practice, or any other isolated mode of experience.

In other words, 'life' (or 'human conduct') and 'conversation of mankind' stand in Oakeshott for what in Collingwood would be 'practice' and 'theory' respectively. 'Theory' is not eliminated altogether but assigned an intermediate position in-between conduct and philosophy (or metaphysics as inquiry into the conditions of the conversation of mankind). 'Theorists' are scientists, historians or 'moral philosophers' (theorizing the world of practice) who investigate phenomena such as 'war' neither as tacticians, diagnosing the best way to win this or that war, nor as 'map-makers', merely distinguishing war from the game of cricket or the War of Spanish Succession from the Napoleonic ones. Theorists understand phenomena in terms of their postulates or presuppositions specific to the theory in question: the War of Spanish Succession understood historically, in terms of its coming into being in the past; or the same war understood practically, in terms of the prudential and moral considerations involved in its pursuit and characteristic of all wars, past or present.

A theorist 'must forswear metaphysics', but 'if there is a risk, it is that he will look back rather than forward': 'he may be said to "offend" (in the expression of Heidegger: "erklären heisst beleidigen") the map-makers and those engaged in conduct only by committing a pardonable solecism of having a different concern: namely, to investigate the conditions of their enterprises, not to engage in them'. But he is 'genuinely and unpardonably' offensive if he begins 'to think of map-making and diagnosis as a kind of worthless nescience, or if, in virtue of occupying a superior platform of understanding and of his concern with postulates, he so far forgets himself as to assume the office of tutor to those he has left behind who have no such concerns' (25–6).

This location of theory poses two interrelated problems. First, it seems to suggest a hierarchical relationship between conduct, theory and metaphysics.[26] Second, it seems to make any theory of human conduct irrelevant for human conduct itself.[27] Things may look differently, however. Each theory aspires for a heavenly home in metaphysics, each presupposes a higher, and more comprehensive, platform of understanding, but the Kantian prohibition on presupposing a substantive image of experience in its totality remains in place. If, in *Experience*, Oakeshott demonstrates that no isolated mode of experience can possibly encompass the whole of experience, in his later work, he argues that theoretical ascent intrinsic to every idiom of inquiry 'runs always to the sea', into the openness of the conversation of mankind, of which one thing is known for sure: it has no premeditated design.

On the other hand, conversability permeates human conduct throughout, given that life is not practice but an amalgamation of activities from which distinct theoretical identities, including practice, are abstracted. A moral philosopher investigating the postulates of the world of practice has nothing instructive to say to those concerned, not with these postulates, but with the choice to do this rather than that. But the philosopher of human conduct, or life, when he detects 'the eristic tones of the voice of science in conference with that modulation of the voice of practical activity *we* call "politics" ' (R 493), diagnoses a tone of voice which is out of tune with the conversation of mankind.

How can this dissonance be established without knowing the postulates of the conversation itself? By conversing, so that conclusions are never 'demonstrated' but understood discursively, by speaking 'an heroic language of our own invention … because we are moved not by the desire to communicate but by the delight of utterance' (539). If this resembles how, in Derrida, 'the very opposition of truth and "mere rhetoric" – the establishment of truth as something which is prior to and independent of "secondary" rhetorical effects and figures – *is founded upon a radical rhetorical gesture*';[28] or more generally, in Heidegger, 'the most fundamental issues are posed by the problematical relation of the truth/falsity pair to the "untruth" they conceal, rather than by contrast between the true and the false' which in modernity 'became reduced to the pursuit of reliable criteria of knowledge',[29] then this is so because this 'discursive untruth' is the 'absolute presupposition' of experience, concealed in the arguments purporting to reveal truth.[30]

What also matters, and what I want to indicate under the headings 'civilization' and 'tradition', is that in Oakeshott, unlike in Heidegger, this 'heroism' is not translated into the conduct of states.

Civilization

If Oakeshottian 'forswearing of metaphysics', having nothing to do with either the dogmatic, pre-Kantian metaphysics or with abandoning the ontological dimension of any interpretation, is meant to remind a theorist that he 'who swims too strongly in this sea is apt soon to find himself out of sight of his object' (R 495), it is also addressed to those whose 'object' is this ontological dimension of order itself. They need not look for it beyond conduct *inter homines* and would do better by proceeding as 'intelligent explorers on foot' rather than going 'by air and at night, reaching their destinations in sleep' (OHC 318). Further, 'forswearing' may be taken literally, as a refusal to *do* or to use metaphysics. 'Those who in fields Elysian would dwell/Do but extend the boundaries of hell.' When Oakeshott concludes his parable for enterprise association with this 'forlorn comment on the engagement itself' (OH 210), he is not rejecting the delights of Elysium but resisting any identification of Elysium with a dwelling-place. There is more to life than the possibilities of use and control, but there is also more to it than 'doing'.

Here Oakeshott is considering two possible locations of 'practice', as a world of wants and satisfactions, in human life generally. The first, which he identifies with 'Heidegger and some others, rather than … more commonplace pragmatists whose award of unconditionality to *praxis* is both arbitrary and obscure', posits the future-oriented present of practical engagement as 'the sole, unconditional, authentic present' in which individuals are enjoying their identity in the exercise of their capacity for transcendent, free purposive activity (23–4). In the second, which matches Collingwood's account in *The New Leviathan*, practical understanding is not unconditional but 'primordial' and inescapable.

Oakeshott's concern is that both these views make other modes of understanding, history in particular, subordinate to practice. Thus Heidegger's critique of the neo-Kantian attempts at establishing the autonomy of historical understanding culminates in his elaboration of the Nietzschean classification of historiography as monumental, antiquarian and critical, leading directly to the most problematic passages in *Being and Time*, in which the anticipatory resoluteness of Dasein's choice to be free by being-free for death results in the heroic pathos of 'the people' and its 'destiny'.[31]

Collingwood's story is interesting in this context precisely because it recognizes this particular danger but finds no theoretical alternative to it, ending up with a kind of 'traditionalist' retreat from modernity rather than any successful mediation of its discontents. At the same time, in

The New Leviathan, Collingwood is as passionate and candid as ever and clearly articulates his choice as the exact opposite of Heidegger's: a 'religion of [inauthentic] dependence' in favour of the 'fatally transcendent' pursuit of authenticity. In this respect, Oakeshott may be read as addressing the tensions left in Collingwood's last book.

Roughly, Collingwood's argument goes as follows. First, his formulation of the question–answer complex acquires an explicitly social form. Societies are held together by the practice of civility, so that anyone who seeks to better his or her condition can be sure of receiving a civil answer to a civil question as to how to do so. They are also in contact with their natural environment and their neighbours. Particular societies, upheld by the recognition of their intrinsic diversity, turn out to be incapable of recognizing otherness when confronted by nature or foreigners. In the former case, they are driven towards mindless technological exploitation; in the latter, strangers are 'often treated with the utmost incivility; often, for example, murdered with impunity and a clear conscience even by peoples who enjoy a relatively high civilization'. In both cases, that which is not part of a society becomes a thing to be dealt with by force (NL 35.25–35.66).

Collingwood's response to this hinges upon the distinction he draws between the activities of 'improving' and 'conserving': 'improving on what is handed down to us is far less important than conserving it' (36.33), for the continuation of this practice of handing down, tradition, is dependent upon the spirit of social agreement and also perpetuates it. This contractual element is reflected in the image of the state. The state is a polarized activity of interaction between two kinds of association, one within which social agreement is already achieved and one where it still has to be brought about. Politics is the activity of conversion of the latter kind into the former, of non-agreements into agreements, in which the element of coercion is ineliminable (25.11–25.59). This is underpinned by Collingwood's evolutionary conception of the self, grounded in his evolutionary conception of understanding as the self-knowledge of the mind. The mature self, capable of entering into agreements with others, evolves by learning to tame its desires through reason which, in turn, develops by learning to distinguish what is merely expedient from right and duty. The knowledge of the latter can be achieved only through historical understanding (15.1–17.83).

Thus the completeness of agreement within the truly social pole of the state is a reflection of the exactness of one's duty, itself a reflection of the relative completeness of historical self-understanding. Its counterpart in politics is the state conducting its relations with other states

on the basis of its historical self-understanding as a community unified through the conversion of disagreements into agreements. Since such a conversion is an impossibility among equals, and complete agreement is an impossibility among equals thus constituted, the best international politics can be is the conversion of disagreements into non-agreements (29.5–29.58).

All in all, a series of interrelated triads – utility–right–duty, economics–politics–ethics, disagreements–non-agreements–agreements – makes up the overarching one, man–society–civilization. Within each of them, the movement is progressive, according to the initial understanding of progression as comprehension in the double-meaning of understanding and inclusion. Knowing one's duty is knowing what is expedient and right and more. This 'more', by dialectically reconciling the claims of utility and right, converts a desiring animal into a unified duty-bound human being. In the case of 'civilization', it calls for a civilization which is universal. This drive is arrested within yet another triad – nature-society-foreigners – and barbarism intervenes. Here Collingwood's resort to tradition appears to be at odds not only with the idea of progress as an increasingly efficient exploitation of both nature and foreigners, but also with his own idea of progress in understanding.

What is interesting in this account is not so much its conclusions but the way it relates certain patterns of state conduct to the analysis of subjectivity. In Oakeshott, this link is explored further through a series of elaborate distinctions. The one Oakeshott himself insists upon is that between individuals proper and individuals *manqués* and the two kinds of government as best suited for the satisfaction of their categorially distinct wants. Individuals proper expect from the office of government authoritative laws specifying conditions for the pursuit of unspecified wants and satisfactions. Individuals *manqués* seek specific assurances concerning distributive or cooperative schemes in which wants themselves, individual or collective, constitute the terms of their association (R 407–37).

The state is understood as oscillating between these two dispositions, which Oakeshott at different points labels as 'morality of individualism' and 'morality of collectivism', or 'the politics of scepticism' and 'the politics of faith' respectively, suggesting that the modern view of politics, as 'the mean in action' in-between the two, emerged out of the ideological struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when some of the most ambitious projects of the politics of faith started running empty:

> Faith had knocked up an impressive score, and its inning ended characteristically in hit-wicket. (The scorers, unaware of what had

> happened, went on chalking up the runs; faith, particularly in France, was believed to have 'a splendid future behind it'.) In the situation, however, it looked as if scepticism would take a mighty revenge. But not at all; the contest was adjourned for tea. And in the conversation that ensued, the political principle of the mean in action made its appearance. (PF 122)

Later, Oakeshott redefines these two understandings of the state as *societas* and *universitas*, insisting that their interplay is best understood historically. If, however,

> somewhat improperly, something more were sought than a historical account of how the character of a modern European state and the office of its government came to be understood in terms of the diverse analogies of *societas* and *universitas* then perhaps it may be found in translating this divergence into the language of contingent human dispositions; that is, recognizing these analogies as reflections of self-understandings, each a historic response to the ordeal of consciousness, which have emerged among the associates who compose the still-puzzling associations called modern European states and have settled themselves there in ever changing proportions. (OHC 326)

However, these 'ever changing proportions' invite questions not only about the *emergence* of the modern state but also about their desirability. Oakeshott refuses to adjudicate between the two dispositions, and this refusal is often presented as a theoretical failure: what Oakeshott argues for – the parity of the two views of the office of government – is different from how he sounds while presenting them. Some commentators attribute this discrepancy to the shortcomings of his historical account.[32] Others seek to improve his analysis of 'political life as we know it'.[33] There is an interesting interpretation of the discrepancy as a rhetorical clanger.[34] As there is a particularly suggestive, if somewhat inconclusive, reading of it in terms of the 'modal difference'. Oakeshott diagnoses the situation of the modern state historically, while outlining the way of going about the resulting tension (a *societas cum universitate*) in the idiom of practice, so that 'the communication between ethics and history functions only in the mind of the philosopher'.[35]

I believe, the discrepancy is necessary if the horizon of the conversation of mankind is to remain open. Oakeshott's presentation, even if this effect was not intended, remains faithful to his forswearing of metaphysics. In his outline of the two characters appropriate for the two

modes of association, Oakeshott clearly relates them to two different onto-theologies, to borrow a term from Heidegger. One presupposes a divine law-giver, the other – 'the Proprietor of an estate of vast resources ("Nature") who, although he may be suspected of being somewhat niggardly, is nevertheless (like the managers of the enterprise) a "providence", not the author of rules of conduct but the source of substantial benefits' (324–5). To adjudicate on this level is to undo the whole of Oakeshott's philosophy. What is left is a conversational gesture which resonates within civil association, insofar as 'civilization' is the activity of imagining civil meanings for 'more general moral ideas (such as fairness and humanity)' (177). Civilization involves not merely imagining something (civility) as being different from what it once was (morality) but imagining it differently here and now; that is, recognizing in it a number of categorially distinct identities co-existing by way of conversation.

Co-existence has a special meaning here. In *Experience*, Oakeshott is mostly concerned with the utilitarian and pragmatist projects of throwing (individual) existence into the future. *On Human Conduct* is nothing but the exploration of conduct *inter homines*. One of the effects of the operation of this 'inter' is that, although individuals are still spending most of their time in the future, deliberating the imagined and wished-for outcomes of their actions, their co-existence is conditioned by the past insofar as the terms of their association are set by their historic achievements abridged into authoritative moral practices. 'Others besides ourselves' appear (in *Rationalism*) not as a bodily presence of psychosomatic beings, either standing in the way of each other's individual satisfactions or offering themselves as a possible source of these satisfactions, but as 'a solid world of things, each with its fixed shape, each with its own point of balance, each with its price' (R 436), all of them acquired historically. In *On Human Conduct* and *On History*, Oakeshott, drawing on Aristotle, transforms this 'solid world of things' into the ensemble of 'individual occurrences', thus transporting them from the world of practice into that of history.

It seems that this modal transport can indeed happen only in the philosopher's mind and only on the level of the conversation of mankind. The central point of my argument is that in politics, as this activity is presented by Oakeshott, it actually happens in life. The importance of this reading of politics for International Relations consists, first, in what happens along the way to the spheres of jurisdiction of particular *societates*; and second, in how this conversation between history and practice points towards 'tradition', as an answer to the question about the moral foundations of international order.

Tradition

At this point I have to admit that my reading of Oakeshott entails a certain displacement in the architectonics of his argument, while following the general thrust of his thinking. To begin with, I invert the order of priority explicitly assigned by Oakeshott to the questions of order and politics. Oakeshott believes the argument of *On Human Conduct* to be centred on the distinction between two kinds of order, civil and enterprise associations, while announcing politics as his 'secondary consideration' (MHC 356). I focus on politics instead. The displacement this causes is reflected in the re-introduction of 'tradition', abandoned by Oakeshott on the way from *Rationalism* to *On Human Conduct*. The displacement is 'modal'. Tradition, as I understand it, is not located in any of the modes of experience. It is history in conversation with practice and as such an alternative to the eristic tones of the voice of science in conference with a certain modulation of practice.

Although this looks like a standard twofold deconstructivist gesture, I refrain from applying the term 'deconstruction' to my reading of Oakeshott because this very gesture is present in his own argument. This is what happens in politics, when the structure of law is intermittently suspended, so that *respublica*, as a practice of civility governed by law, is transformed into a *civitas*, as a 'historic' politically enacted association. It is this moment of 'escape' from one set of modal conditions into the other that calls for the subject with 'a disposition to prefer the road to the inn, ambulatory conversation to deliberation about means for achieving ends, the rules of the road to directions about how to reach a destination, and to recognize that

> The road runs always to the sea
> 'Twixt duty and delight'. (OHC 324)

While their characteristics are certainly local, in their characters, both this subject and a *civitas* he enacts disclose the universality of 'the proud and reckless *autonomia* of Roland which makes Roncevalles a memorable event in the history of European moral imagination, and the note of his horn an imperishable utterance, echoing down the centuries' (239). What is also required from this subject, however, is the recognition of the reality of others besides himself. This reality consists not in the difference of appearances or opinions, but in that the language of moral intercourse is also spoken 'somewhat monotonously', so that the 'solid gracelessness' of this manner of speaking 'makes possible the stylist, the

hero, the saint, the aristocrat and the vagabond, who, caring only for its intimations of magnificence, are apt to neglect the prosaic pieties which keep barbarism at bay' (66).

So the displacement I have in mind entails a shift from Oakeshott's understanding of the office of government in terms of individuals proper and individual *manqués* towards the distinction between two manners of speaking, both found *within* civil association, between familiarity and adventurism, between cultivation and exploration. Again, this distinction is present in Oakeshott's own argument throughout, but perhaps most interestingly in the interplay of ruling and politics.

This shifts theoretical attention away from the opposition between *societas* and *universitas* towards the relationship between law and politics. My interest in this shift is twofold. First, the reflectivist stress on the political is meant to unsettle the (deceptive) normalcy of the rule of law. Not only the rule of law is based on the concealed force of law, it is a form of rule which is in force without signification: 'All societies and all cultures today (it does not matter whether they are democratic or totalitarian, conservative or progressive) have entered into a legitimation crisis in which law (… the entire text of tradition in its regulative form …) is in force' merely as a revelation that affirms itself solely by its being in force.[36] Second, the classical approach often misreads the nature of this challenge and reacts to it by opposing the legalistic structure of international society to those of international system and world society, both of which are presented as examples of enterprise association: the former as the transactional association of states, the latter as the cooperative association of individuals.

What such positioning overlooks is that it is international society itself that is in danger of becoming an enterprise association because its legalistic procedures include also the attribution of agency. International society is affirmed (through the force of the actually existing states) as consisting of states likened to Oakeshottian *cives*, which these actually existing states are not. The problem is not with the 'corrupting' presence of international system, composed of these very states now recognized in their capacity as power-bargainers. We may well observe today how their deadly technological potential is being transformed into a more elaborate way of disclosing the comfortable side of their power:

> In particular, the transition might prove perfectly compatible with the affirmation of cultural diversity, with the advocacy of ideals of community, with the nurturing of distinct regional, ethnic identities, and with the ethic of mutual care and respect. What the transition

> would mean, however, is that these ideals could not find expression in a non-instrumental framework of civil association; the rights now associated with them would instead become indulgences granted on a discretionary basis by a more or less benign administrative government.[37]

The problem is that international society, once opposed to world society, loses the resources needed for the 'civilization' of such ideas as fairness or humanity, expressed in the variety of vernacular moral languages, by giving them 'civil' meanings relevant for international law, even when this law is understood as a more or less coherent arrangement of the authoritative non-instrumental practices of statesmen. What is needed instead is a different idea of world society. This is suggested by Oakeshottian politics, for neither in the actual conduct of states nor in Oakeshott's analysis of civil association civil meanings are invented by statesmen. This is the task of politics, while there is no 'office' of politics: 'And when Aristotle identified it as an *agora* activity it was not to give it an exclusive venue but to distinguish it from the discussion of the affairs of a tribe and from the management of the estate' (OHC 166). Politics is 'autonomous' not on account of having a 'place' but because its conditions can be identified and distinguished from those of other activities.

Thus the overall picture might look as follows. It is possible to think of international society as composed of states understood as *societates*. The same states, now understood as *universitates*, compose international system. As in Oakeshott's account of the state itself, international order may be understood as a *societas cum universitas*, in which international system and international society have settled themselves historically in ever changing proportions. In this constellation, international system has little to offer beyond the promise of an ever more efficient use and control of the natural world and humankind. Not least because use and control is what is expected from it by humankind, so that one day inter*national* system itself may be abandoned for the sake of a more useful (and also more controlling) instrument.

However, within international society there is a possibility for politics, as an activity of thinking in terms of the desirability of the overall conditions of an order not limited to the order of states, world order. World order here is not sought in a *cosmopolis*, either 'original' or located at the imagined end of some cosmic process, but it is cosmopolitan in a different sense. Politics is world politics inasmuch as it is an activity addressed to the conditions of international society as a set of civil meanings invented for the actually existing practices of world society. The latter

are the practices of 'good conduct', distinguished from civil conduct, and as such they are the only 'ground' for political deliberation.

Precisely for this reason, however, world *society* is a misleading name. In its stead I propose 'tradition', not least because non-instrumental practices of this kind cannot be understood as belonging to any isolated mode of experience, but exist in the form of the conversation of history and practice. This conversation requires continuous translation from the language of ethics into the language of time. This translation, in turn, is best seen through the on-going exchange between Oakeshott and Collingwood. Thus, in *Experience*, Oakeshott analyses the distinction between the present (as a category of practice) and the past (as a category of history). Responding to his critique of historical understanding based on this distinction, Collingwood in turn distinguishes the (inaccessible) abstract past and the 'living past' as a proper subject of history. In *Rationalism*, Oakeshott responds by opposing this living past of practice to the 'dead past' of history; 'dead', not so much because epistemologically inaccessible but because modally different.[38] At the same time, 'tradition' comes to the fore, inviting both practical understanding (in the form of Aristotelian *phronesis*) and knowledge of the detail acquired historically. In *On Human Conduct*, traditions give way to 'practices', while Oakeshott's insistence on the categorial distinction between practical and historical understanding is restated in *On History*.[39]

However, this distinction applies to 'theorists', not to *homines* in conduct, who inhabit a much more messy affair than any of the theoretically constructed worlds of ideas, while moving about it somewhat inconsequentially. This movement cannot be captured by any of the abstract homogeneous theoretical constructions, modes of experience, each presupposing its own 'facts' or 'individuals'. What escapes this capture cannot be 'theorized'. What escapes the formal conditions of the practice of civility cannot be 'civilized'. Oakeshott's metaphor for this escape is conversation. In conduct, this escape is known as delight; in the conversation of mankind, as poetry.

Although this is not immediately visible in Oakeshott's argument, behind poetry lies the 'pathological' condition of speechlessness, just as the tranquillity of a commonwealth is always conjoined by the struggle for recognition. It is not the speechlessness of a finite creature crushed by the immensity of the Word which it cannot possibly utter, but the experience of being lost for words in the presence of the variety of the universes of discourse. This theme in Oakeshott is clearly, albeit unconventionally, Hobbesian, and it may seem like another displacement in my argument that Hobbes appears in it only at the very end. This, again,

is deliberate. In a discussion of international relations, it is all too inviting to identify Hobbes with the transition from the state of nature into the state of civility (as Collingwood does) and thus with the political. Oakeshott's Hobbes has little, if anything, to do with all this. In a sense, he enters the scene once it is already subdivided into sovereign associations and his question is how to defend a *civitas* by generating the power of the Sovereign under these conditions. This suggests, among other things, that the Sovereign himself is manifestly incapable of doing just that. Defending a *civitas* is never a one-off engagement. In Oakeshott, it unfolds on 'two different planes which can never meet' indeed, but these planes are not located on a single dialectical spiral (as Carr's, and also Collingwood's, argument tends to suggest) but on two different platforms of understanding, history and practice. Here, as in Hobbes, 'nothing is in progress; there is no promise, only fulfilment'.

3
Politics

Politics is a kind of human activity. Few, if any, would seriously quarrel with this. To understand any human activity, Oakeshott once told his students, is 'to discern the character of the activity itself and not merely to classify its products'; that is, to establish the place of a given activity 'on the map of human activity in general' (HL 15). Here agreement is less likely, especially so once it comes to the possibility of world politics.

The place of politics, it is often believed, is within a bounded association known in modern history as the sovereign state. The modern state, Collingwood seems to agree, 'established itself as *par excellence* the political organ of society', and 'those who would banish sovereignty as an outworn fiction are really only trying to shirk the whole problem of politics'. Sovereignty, however, 'is merely a name for political activity' and, as such, 'does not belong to any determinate organization. It belongs only to that political life which is shared by all human beings' (EPP 106). Now, it seems, all politics is world politics, 'and not to recognize the claim of politics' of this kind is to disclose, in Oakeshott's words, 'some defect of character or sensibility' (RP 91). This was written with clear intention of setting a limit to the claims of politics; but also at a time, in 1939, when Oakeshott referred to politics as 'a second-rate form of human activity … at once corrupting to the soul and fatiguing to the mind'.[1] In *On Human Conduct*, it is an activity 'as rare as it is excellent' (OHC 180).

This change of attitude had nothing to do with some sudden, inexplicable improvement in the quality of political action in the years that separated the two statements. Rather, Oakeshott took politics out of the context of the actually existing European states and their analogues elsewhere and placed it into a different one, that of civil association. In fact, 'politics' is one of the very few words from the vocabulary of the

modern European state for which Oakeshott did not substitute some term of his own so as to distinguish them from their current counterparts too often 'mistaken for the characteristics of historic and equivocal associations' (109).

This does not mean that civil association or politics is treated in separation from *any* locale. No human action can be understood this way:

> The overt actions of men take on a certain intelligibility when we recognize them as the ingredients of a disposition to behave in a certain manner, the dispositions of conduct in turn become understandable when they are recognized as the idiosyncrasies of a certain human character, and the human character becomes less mysterious when we observe it, not as a general type or as a possibility, but in its place in a local context. And the process may be continued in the gradual expansion of this context in place and time. (HL 3–4)

In the case of politics, the limits to such gradual expansion are set by the circumstances to which a certain view of the office of government is appropriate:

> And the chief feature of these circumstances is the appearance of subjects who desire to make choices for themselves, who find happiness in doing so and who are frustrated in having choices imposed upon them. … All that could make such a political theory unintelligible would be the demonstration that subjects of this disposition have never existed; and all that could make such a political theory of merely historic interest would be the recognition that subjects of this sort do not now exist. (84)

Thus the theory of politics in question appears in the first instance as limited to the conditions of modernity as these took shape in Europe. However, these limits themselves are the proper subject of inquiry, and here, anticipating a great deal of what was to become the central concern of contemporary International Relations, Collingwood attributed them to the failure of liberalism to affect international relations, so that the 'unnatural union of internal liberalism with external illiberalism … led by way of international anarchy' to the desuetude of liberalism as such and raised suspicions about the character of subjects disposed to understand human action in terms of their own individual choices. Yet this unnatural union was only an outward expression of the failure to affect the inner life of human associations. This was due to a more profound

boundary, drawn both in theory and practice, 'between the public affairs of the community as a whole and the private affairs of its members' (EPP 185). Political theory had to address itself to the conditions of international anarchy and not to domestic order only, but to do so it had to begin not from the study of interstate relations but from its own first principles most of which 'had been distilled from the body of Christian practice by a long chain of thinkers' and then 'bottled and labelled' for further theoretical use (189).

In other words, certain political practices do stop at certain manmade borders, but to understand why they do so, one has to take Hume's advice and, 'instead of taking here and there a castle or village on the frontier, march up to the capital or centre' of all understanding, 'to human nature itself'.[2] To be sure, as Collingwood once remarked, rather angrily, it will take 'the most pedantic kind of imbecile' to attempt to tackle comprehensively such questions as 'What is man?' or 'What is society?' as 'a mere preliminary to a question in practical politics' (227); and some such objection to metaphysics informs one of the recurrent themes of the classical approach where International Relations is seen as a 'craft discipline' which does not call 'for knowledge of the philosophy of science'.[3] For Oakeshott, however, the virtue of studying politics in a university, and thus of having an academic discipline dedicated to such study, lay in the possibility of moving away from the manner of thinking and speaking practised by political actors themselves: 'If there is a manner of thinking and speaking that can properly be called "political", the appropriate business of a university in respect of it is not to use it, or to teach the use of it, but to explain it – that is, to bring to bear upon it one or more of the recognized modes of explanation', such as philosophy, history, but also science or mathematics (R 212). It is true that Hobbes' *Leviathan* or Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* may be more appropriate for the study of politics than Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, but their propriety consists not so much in their being dedicated to 'politics' as their subject but rather in their quality as the exemplars of the philosophical mode of thinking about this subject (213). And to be able to appreciate this quality, one has to know what it takes to think about politics in this manner.

Therefore before answering the main question of this chapter – What is the place of politics on the map of human activity generally? – it is necessary to address another one: What does it mean to think about politics philosophically? At this stage, the discussion of Collingwood's and Oakeshott's answers to both questions will be rather cursory, glossing over most of the differences which exist in their accounts of both philosophy and politics. The task is to establish the identity of the language

in which both thinkers speak, so as to see, in subsequent chapters, what difference this language makes once brought to bear upon the study of world politics.

Contemplation

A lot in contemporary debates in International Relations revolves around naturalism and further division between outsider's and insider's stories. To take one step backwards, Terry Nardin, while drawing on Oakeshott, addressed the issue long before it got onto the mainstream agenda by outlining two ways of understanding the balance of power. On outsider's view, the balance, as 'the work of nature', leads to an equilibrium as 'the result of a process, not the outcome of choice'. For the insider, the balance of power 'appears as a condition of international society that must be consciously pursued in order to be enjoyed'.[4] In substance, if not in presentation, this was not a new idea, explored in some detail by the English school. Yet the key-word in Nardin, borrowed from Oakeshott, is 'enjoyed', and a *key*-word it is; with its help it is possible to unlock a passage connecting the 'ontological investigations' of the English school with metaphysical inquiries of the British Idealism.

Contemplation and its modes

Appeal to 'enjoyment' in the discussion of 'reality' is not Oakeshott's invention. The most immediate authority is F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*.[5] According to Bradley, reality as the whole of experience immediately presents itself to the individual. However, immediacy, by implying the separation of thought from perception, contradicts the requirement of totality. The resulting dilemma is stated by Collingwood: 'Either reality is the immediate flow of subjective life, in which case it is subjective but not objective, it is enjoyed but cannot be known; or else it is that which we know, in which case it is objective but not subjective, it is the world of real things outside the subjective life of our mind and outside each other' (IH 141). For both Collingwood and Oakeshott, this dilemma was rooted in the philosophically erroneous antinomy of subject and object. An individual's understandings of situations in which he finds himself are his and in this sense they are 'subjective'; but as understandings they can be interrogated (successfully or not) both by the individual himself and by others, and in this sense they are 'objective' (OHC 51; EIM 48–69).

Still Oakeshott makes significant use of rejected extremes by identifying two kinds of responses to the world which bear some resemblance to the

Bradlean dilemma as stated by Collingwood: 'Either we may regard the world in a manner which does not allow us to consider anything but what is immediately before our eyes and does not provoke us to any conclusions; or we may look upon what is going on before us as evidence for what does not itself appear, considering, for example, its causes and effects' (R 157). The first response is that of the artist whose reaction to the immediate flow of causeless images is best described as 'delight'. The second is subdivided into 'practical' and 'scientific'. In the former, particular situations are understood in respect of their relationship to ourselves; in the latter, the attitude to the world is 'objective', as the world independent of ourselves and the idiosyncrasies of our individual perception of it (158–9).

Thus initial enjoyment is worked out into aesthetic delight and practical enjoyment understood as competence in conduct resulting from the acquisition of skills of responding to the world. Scientific knowledge is different from both, but neither Oakeshott nor Collingwood is prepared to accept it as the only kind of knowledge: 'Science is the scene of remarkable triumphs; so is agriculture; that does not prove either that surgeons ought to perform their operations with a plough or that philosophers ought to attack their problems with the weapons of the scientist' (SM 281). Knowledge is indivisible, present not only in the formulae of a scientist but in the contemplation of a poet as well. It varies in kind from one form of experience to another and this variation has to be explained. But to apply a single mode of inquiry to all provinces of experience is to commit the cardinal sin of theorizing: irrelevance, *ignoratio elenchi*. Appealing to 'that love of moderation which has as frequently been fatal to English philosophy as it has been favourable to English politics', irrelevance masquerading as a compromise increases, instead of mitigating, the errors of extremes (EIM 196–7).

The horns of the Bradlean dilemma can be escaped by a radical philosophical move re-establishing the totality of experience. Reality is experience and nothing but experience. Experience is the world of ideas marked with unity and self-completeness. Thought is no longer separated from perception and thus stops performing the negative function of destroying the totality of experience but performs the positive one of bringing about its coherence as the world of ideas, since for any world of ideas coherence is the mark of its unity and self-completeness and therefore of it being a world.

The task of philosophy is to contemplate experience in its totality in order to make it intelligible. Not that it is impossible in principle. But a man 'cannot be a philosopher and nothing else; to be so were either

more or less than human' (3). The mind 'feels cold without an object other than itself' and creates 'a palace of art, a world of mythology, a cosmos of abstract conceptual machinery, and so forth' (SM 291). This is as childish as to wish to get to heaven in order to want there a salmon-rod; but this is what all of us do, philosophers, when off-duty, included. And this is how the complex landscape of the world of knowledge is turned into an abstract map divided into the provinces of art, religion, science and history (Collingwood); or the universal stream of experience is arrested into the backwaters of science, history and practice (Oakeshott).

Once experience is thus divided opposition between its modes takes the form of the 'state of nature' in its starkest version. At the point of arrest, construction work begins: each mode creates its own world of ideas in accordance with its peculiar presuppositions and puts forward a universal claim since every such world is 'not an island in the sea of experience, but a limited view of the totality of experience' (EIM 71). There is no one to arbitrate between these competing claims; and philosophy is the least acceptable judge. As Collingwood put it:

> On this scene of international warfare the philosopher pictures himself as looking down calmly … seeing perhaps that it is God's will for these deluded mortals to fly at one another's throats, or perhaps, in a voice of authority, bidding them be still, with a result suggestive rather of Canute than of Christ. For they, poor things, do not recognize the philosopher's superhuman status: they actually think he is one of the combatants. … And this is perfectly just; for the philosopher asserts philosophy as the only legitimate form of experience, and not only condemns the others as illusionary but adds insult to the injury by giving reasons for this condemnation, which goes against all maxims of civilized warfare. Philosophers are justly, therefore, the objects of universal dislike. They fight their own professional battle and claim to be defending the ark of God. (SM 307–8)[6]

In the same ironic vein Oakeshott retells the story of Plato's cave-dwellers one of whom, driven by 'philosophical' curiosity, leaves a hollow in the earth and after prolonged travels returns to instruct his fellows that what they are taking for a horse is 'a modification of the attributes of God'. At this stage, they 'will applaud his performance even where they cannot quite follow it'; but were he to meddle into their practical affairs by insisting, for example, that a particular court-ruling should be postponed until the meaning of truth is elucidated, 'the more perceptive of the cave-dwellers would begin to suspect that, after all, he was not an

interesting theorist but a fuddled and pretentious "theoretician" who should be sent on his travels again, or accommodated in a quiet home' (OHC 30).

The problem is, philosophers cannot help it. Not dabbling in the affairs of practical, historic or scientific men; from these it is possible to abstain, although this is likely to invite accusations of treason, but philosophy should not be really troubled by what others think of it (and there is hardly any doubt as to what they think). What philosophy cannot do without betraying its *own* character is that it cannot stop seeking reasons for its assertions. As such this reasoning may be quite instructive but: 'We should listen to philosophers only when they talk philosophy' (EIM 355).

The scale of contemplation

But what does 'talking philosophy' mean? Defining philosophy as thinking about experience in its totality will put on one side all thinking that does not hold this view of experience with an implication that the view itself was reached by way of thinking other than philosophical. An approach that starts with a definition of philosophy's subject-matter 'would offer no hope of success except to a person convinced that he already possessed an adequate conception of this object; convinced, that is, that his philosophical thought had already reached its goal' (EPM 2). Instead, philosophy can be understood as a procedure conducted in accordance with a method that, if philosophy is to be distinguished from other such engagements, has to have some peculiar features.

Thus, in *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott returns to the story of *Experience and Its Modes*, inverting the flow of inquiry. In *Experience* the view of the all-embracing world of ideas was postulated, particular arrests in it identified, studied and recognized as philosophical errors. Now he begins by stating that the gross total of whatever may be going on is incomprehensible until arrested. In error or not, this is how we make the world intelligible, and therefore habitable, by identifying a particular 'going-on' in terms of its 'character' which in turn is an arrangement of 'characteristics' that we learn to notice, remember, recollect, recognize and select.[7]

Once any such character is identified, a 'platform of understanding' is reached and a verdict on a going-on, a 'theorem' (to distinguish this juncture in the adventure of understanding from the activity as such, that is theory) is passed. Any such platform is 'conditional' insofar as the intelligibility it offers is conditioned by postulates or assumptions on the basis of which a particular character is abstracted from whatever else

may be going on. This conditionality cannot escape the theorist's attention thus turning every theorem into a provisional juncture, not only an achievement in the adventure of understanding, but also an invitation to further travels: 'The irony of all theorizing is its propensity to generate, not an understanding, but a not-yet-understood' (OHC 11).

This saddles the theorist with a choice: either the *engagement* or *enterprise* of understanding; unconditional critical reflection whose proper object is a going-on called 'mind', or rational investigation of specific 'bodies'. Both commitments are valuable but the propriety of each has its limits. To switch gears from one to another is to commit the sin of irrelevance, Oakeshottian *ignoratio elenchi* presented by Collingwood as the 'fallacy of misplaced argument' and the 'fallacy of swapping horses'.

From a single going-on distinct identities predicating distinct 'orders' of inquiry can be abstracted. The movement of a human eyelid can be identified as a wink or as a blink and there is a possibility of misidentification; but once the theorist makes up his mind, he commits himself to a certain order of inquiry (OHC 15). Now he cannot seek answers to the question: What is the meaning of this blink? This would be the fallacy of misplaced argument since blinks do not have meanings and the question does not arise. Nor can he claim that *the same problem* can be addressed in two distinct stages or steps one of which will treat of 'blinkness' and another of 'winkness'; or to postulate some 'rump blinkness' in every wink in order to investigate the correlation between 'blinkness' and 'winkness' which will provide him with superior understanding of moving eyelids. A problem identified at the first stage of such a dualistic enterprise will cease to be the same problem at the second:

> Here you are in the middle of a problem. The same horse that got you into it must get you out again. No amount of admiration for some other horse must betray you into the Fallacy of Swapping Horses. If the wretched horse called Mental Science has stuck you in mid-stream you can flog him, or you can coax him, or you can get out and lead him; or you can drown, as better men than you have drowned before. But you must not swap him for the infinitely superior horse called Natural Science. For this is a magic journey, and if you do that the river will vanish and you will find yourself back where you started. (NL 2.6–2.74)

Thus, not all platforms of understanding are related to each other, and of those that are, not all form a philosophical ladder leading to unconditionally satisfactory understanding. Cartesian and positivist projects

'are to be deprecated not for what they have achieved (because, of course, they have achieved something), but for what they deny – the significance, or even the possibility, of radically subversive reflection' (RP 142). They attempt to do so by postulating 'facts' that are independent of thought and therefore remain unmodified by reflection. By supplementing such 'facts' with reasons they produce what Collingwood describes as science of the second order the ultimate achievement of which is progression from a 'this-is-so' to a 'this-is-so-assuming-that'. Achievement possibly it is, but not from the standpoint of philosophy, which recognizes assumptions and conclusions alike as abstractions to be got rid of since a 'philosophic concept is not a … scientific concept plus the presuppositions which lie behind it, but is itself a concrete unity' (128–9).

The definition of a concept, thus understood, begins with the question – What is going on here? – which contains not only an invitation for an answer but a recognition that an answer is giveable, a recognition that some specific going-on is identifiable, in fact already identified in a rudimentary form, otherwise the question would not have arisen. In other words, 'in all philosophical study we begin by knowing something … and on that basis go on to learn more; at each step we re-define our concept by way of recording our progress; and the process can end only when the definition states all that the concept contains' (EPM 97–8). Philosophy can be understood as keeping a philosopher's log on the never-ending voyage aimed not at discovering any new worlds but at abating mystery in the one already inhabited. What formal logic condemns as arguing in a circle, accusing those engaged in it of coming out at the same door as they went in, and therefore coming out empty-handed, may be of utmost value. Philosophical exposition is akin to empirical description, that is, aimed at collecting all attributes of a concept, but unlike empirical science philosophy at any point seeks to understand logical connections between these attributes, and this makes philosophical definition dependent upon the circumstances in which the concept is considered (92–100; also RP 142, 151):

> To follow such an exposition means gradually building up in one's mind the conception which is being expounded; coming to know it better and better as each new point is made, and at each new point summing up the whole exposition to that point. … [T]he phases through which the definition passes in its growth are not only new in degree, as we come to know the concept better, but new in kind, as we come to grasp new aspects of it. The various aspects will therefore

> constitute the scale of forms, beginning with a rudimentary or minimum definition and adding qualitatively new determinations which gradually alter the original definition so as to make it a better and better statement of the concept's essence: a statement, at each step, complete as far as it goes, and expressing a real and necessary specification of the concept. (EPM 100)

Adjacent forms on this scale are not merely alternative views of the same 'thing' or 'fact'. By affirming only part of a concept, the lower form denies whatever else may be found in it, and by superseding this lower form the higher rejects this denial, thus subsuming the positive content of the lower form and denying the negative one. For instance, utilitarianism is not untrue; its error 'lies not in what it asserts but in what it denies; but it asserts so little and denies so much that the error in it is a great deal more conspicuous than the truth' (SM 172; EPM 86–91). Or, as Oakeshott puts it, if philosophy rejects utilitarianism in favour of 'self-realization', 'what it is asserting is *not* that happiness and self-realization are two possible ends … and that self-realization ought to be preferred, but that happiness is the false analysis of the end actually sought and that self-realization is a true analysis' (RP 125; compare EPM 102–3).

To restate Collingwood's idea of the scale of forms using one of Oakeshott's earlier metaphors, reflection may be likened to ascending a glass tower. It starts with a picture of the world as seen from the ground floor gradually altered by new scenes brought into view by further ascent. The philosopher may be inclined to climb higher than the rest since he is interested in grasping the picture of the world in its totality. This, however, is not the primary ground of the distinction between philosophy and other forms of reflection:

> What at bottom distinguishes different forms of reflection is … the willingness or unwillingness of the thinker to carry with him to higher levels the fixed and remembered relics of the view as it appeared at a lower level, the willingness or unwillingness to allow what was once seen to determine a later vision. The important distinction is between the thinker for whom the different levels of observation provide views of 'things' already known, and the thinker who, as it were, uninfluenced by memory and carrying nothing with him as he climbs, knows at each level only the scene presented to his vision and the mediation by which it came into view. … Thus, philosophy may be thought of as unhindered reflective enterprise; we should all be philosophers were we not liable to be distracted by what we first saw. (RP 142–4)

Now, this paradoxical relationship between philosophy and the pastness of human experience marks a point at which the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's accounts of experience can no longer be glossed over and has to be accentuated. It is at this point that historical understanding becomes for Collingwood the only appropriate way of attending to the totality of experience. For Oakeshott, even one order of inquiry, appropriate for intelligible and intelligent goings-on, is still subdivided into a number of the categorially distinct idioms of inquiry, such as history or non-normative ethics, the latter being a 'philosophy of practical experience' (EIM 335–45). Whereas within each of these idioms of inquiry conditional platforms of understanding are hierarchically linked to each other, the idioms themselves are not. Accordingly, Collingwood's and Oakeshott's ideas of politics differ significantly precisely because, although both believe that the business of a theorist is not to construct a 'philosophy of politics' but to think about politics philosophically, philosophical thinking itself takes two different routes.

Action

The starting point, however, is the same. While defining 'politics', both Collingwood and Oakeshott begin by considering what politics is not; first, because what is sought is the place of politics on the map of experience and not just the ability to recognize things political when one sees them, second, because of what both understand as systemic ambiguity springing from the fact that what is being defined is a concept in a living language (PA 7–9; PF 12–6):

> The proper meaning of the word … is never something upon which the word sits perched like a gull on a stone; it is something over which the word hovers like a gull over a ship's stern. Trying to fix the proper meaning in our minds is like coaxing the gull to settle in the rigging, with the rule that the gull must be alive when it settles. … The way to discover the proper meaning is to ask not, 'What do we mean?' but, 'What are we trying to mean?' And this involves the question 'What is preventing us from meaning what we are trying to mean?' (PA 7)

This ambiguity is not just an unfortunate outcome of the corruption or historical evolution of language, nor is it merely a constant companion to the ambivalence of action; it is a reflection of the heterogeneity and complexity of 'this brittle world, so full of doubleness'; and in the case

of politics it is both a curse and a blessing:

> Its merit is practical: like a veil which softens the edges and moderates the differences for what it at once hides and reveals, this ambiguity of language has served to conceal divisions which to display fully would invite violence and disaster. Its defect is mainly philosophical: the ambiguity makes it difficult for us to think clearly about our politics and stands in the way of any profound political self-knowledge. And it may be added that the opportunity it gives the disingenuous politician to spread confusion is a practical defect to set against its practical usefulness. (PF 21)

What follows is a strategy to be pursued: to investigate the boundary of meaning in hope of locating there the character of extremes that shape the field of political activity and then to elucidate the manner in which this shaping goes on. This is what Oakeshott repeatedly does, identifying two poles between which both the activity of governing and the understanding of it oscillate in Europe. However, while defining politics in *On Human Conduct*, he makes little use of one of these poles, 'enterprise association'. Instead this mode of association is subsumed under the rudimentary definition ('transactional association') of human conduct out of which the ideal character of civil association is gradually built up. This resembles what Collingwood identifies as the major insight of the 'classical politics':

> It … recognizes in the facts of political life … a polarized complex, a thing with two ends: a dialectic. … It has not only two ends like a bit of string, it has two ends like a mill-race, one where the water goes in and one where the water comes out. Politics is a process whereby one condition of human life is converted into another. … [S]uch a process could not happen of itself; it had to be brought about by hard work; and the hard work had to be done by persons who were already mature in mind, already possessed of free will, already members of a society. … So far as this process actually takes place there is no need to describe the non-social element. If all the water that goes in at one end comes out at the other, we need not bother to measure it at both ends …, the social end of the process is not only the right one to begin at, it is the only one that need be thought about. (NL 32.21–32.39)

However, the difference is more important than the similarities. Oakeshottian politics is not the process of conversion from the state of

nature into the condition of civility but an activity possible only within civil association. In what follows I shall trace the growth of the two definitions of politics starting with that of Collingwood.

Utility, rightness, duty

Since what is sought is a philosophical definition of politics, in answering the question 'What is preventing us from meaning what we are trying to mean?' it is necessary to begin with the ambiguity springing from a special kind of duality: that between philosophical and non-philosophical concepts. The answer is implied in the understanding of philosophical thinking presented above: a concept in its non-philosophical phase 'qualifies a limited part of reality, whereas in its philosophical, it leaks or escapes out of these limits and invades the neighbouring regions, tending at last to colour our thought of reality as a whole' (EPM 34). Consequently: 'Philosophical thought is that which conceives its object as activity; empirical thought is that which conceives its object as substance or thing' (EPP 58).

This means going beyond political theory conceived as the theory of the state. 'Empirical' understanding of politics in terms of substance (the state) and its attributes (sovereignty) has its merits, but its defect is grave: sooner or later it finds itself incapable of answering the questions concerning 'the limits of the state and its relations with other such entities, be they other states, or churches, or trade unions, or municipalities'. One possible way-out is to start from the conception of political action, 'and think of the state not as a thing but as a collective name for a certain complex of political actions' (92–4; compare RP 119–26).

For Collingwood, action is specified in terms of its goodness. Absolutely, everything is good insofar as goodness, along with unity and reality, is assigned as a predicate to every being. But goodness is a matter of degree; something is called 'bad' when it falls short of satisfying a standard imposed for purposes arising out of particular practices or situations. Thus, to say that something is good is to say that it is chosen from a number of alternatives recognized by the agent as open to him in a given situation. What seems to be an attribute of things can be properly defined in terms of a specific activity: choice or decision. Choosing falls into two categories: caprice, when the agent chooses without being conscious of any reasons for doing so; and rational choice, when such reasons are given as answers to the question, 'Why do I choose this?'. Modern Europeans are accustomed to giving three such answers: because it is useful, because it is right and because it is my duty (GRU 391–435; NL 13.1–14.69).

Now, utility, conformity to rules and performance of one's duty are alternative standards for the evaluation of action. The relation between them, stated negatively, is that of the degree of capriciousness involved. Utilitarian analysis goes some way in understanding choices by stating a relation between ends and means, but fails to account for preferences given to specific means or for the choice of ends to be pursued. Analysis in terms of rules, by stating what kinds of action are right on particular occasions, goes farther than that but does not specify all possible occasions or the precise manner in which a rule should be followed; and further, it cannot account for actions that, while obeying one rule, violate another (NL 15.1–16.63; GRU 435–67). Next comes an important junction in the argument at which Collingwood introduces a distinction between right and duty, stating his disagreement with those for whom they are identical.

The contention that one's duty should be identical with right (that is, should satisfy the requirements of a formally stated law) is grounded in the belief that an action cannot be both right and wrong at the same time. For Collingwood, this is unsound. Since rightness is the form of goodness and goodness is not an attribute of things intrinsic to them, but conferred upon them by human choices made in specific situations, the propriety of both the agent's situation and individuality should have some bearing on the goodness of the action and its relation to the standard of rightness. As far as situational propriety is concerned, no one is so fanatical a Kantian as to believe that the same set of rules is appropriate for a heathen Greek and a modern Christian. Individuality is a function of free will, understood as capacity for self-liberation, not merely from the dictate of desire, which is the extreme form of capriciousness, but from capriciousness as such. Therefore a way out of the brain-twister introduced by Kant and Fichte – whether one should tell the truth when that leads to murder – depends on what kind of person one is or intends to be: 'If your rule is to tell the truth at all costs, … you will tell the truth at the cost of human life. … If your rule is to save human life, tell a lie. Kant and Fichte will be very shocked; but need you care?' (NL 16.72).

This emphasis on individuality allows Collingwood to articulate the highest (as devoid of caprice as possible) form of action: performance of one's duty, which in the case of a concrete individual acting in a concrete situation (and now this is the only case conceivable) can be defined as 'the act which for him is both possible and necessary: the act which at that moment character and circumstance combine to make it inevitable, if he has a free will, that he should freely will to do' (NL 17.1–17.83; GRU 467–79).

Thus action is specified in terms of its goodness. Goodness is conferred upon action by human choices. It changes in kind according to the change in the degree of rationality. In other words, utility, rightness and duty constitute a hierarchically linked scale of forms. Accordingly, moral philosophy, as the science of human conduct, is subdivided into economics, politics and ethics. Politics seems to belong exclusively to the sphere of the regularian analysis.

To return to the Oakeshottian figure of the tower of reflection, for those occupying its ground floor, all action is capricious. From the next level (according to Collingwood, occupied by the Greeks with their teleological understanding of Nature) the view of the world of action is limited by the horizon of utility. Further ascent (to the level reached by the Romans and European Christians who understood both Nature and human artifice as governed by laws) brings into view the world of rules. The next step (intimated by the rise of historical consciousness in modern Europe) modifies the picture by awakening those who reach it to the idea of duty. Similarly in Oakeshott, there are three traditions of thinking about politics: Rational–Natural (Aristotle and Plato); Will and Artifice (Spinoza and Hobbes); Rational Will (Hegel), as an attempt to synthesize the first two while operating 'on the analogy of human history' (R 227).

Within the corners of this figure, while exploring the horizons of conduct from within the world of action, agents are guided by 'practical reason', whereas while contemplating this conduct from the tower they are engaged in 'theoretical' reasoning (NL 14.1–14.5, 18.1–18.92). The two forms of reason are inseparable not least because of our propensity to carry with us to higher levels the fixed and remembered relics of the view as it appeared at a lower one. This is one expression of what Collingwood calls the 'law of primitive survivals' (9.5), in this case understood as the survival of practical reason into the theoretical reason that has developed out of it. As with all Collingwood's concepts, it can be applied positively and negatively. Positively, it guards theoretical reason against degeneration into 'academic thinking' pursued by 'practitioners of a fugitive and cloistered virtue peeping out of their hermitage windows to spy on the body politic' (32.11). Negatively, it entails anthropomorphism, a relic of practical reason that cannot be eradicated, only rendered harmless by 'our own laughter at the ridiculous figure we cut, incorrigibly anthropomorphic thinkers inhabiting a world where anthropomorphic thinking is a misfit' (14.5–14.61).

One manifestation of such thinking is an understanding of social activity as a case of 'we do *this*' which substitutes *this* for me doing the

'this' and someone else responding by performing the 'that' (16.41). Once human conduct is thus reified, utilitarian thinking takes charge and embarks upon an activity for which its ends–means analysis is best suited – planning (15.73). This Collingwood recognizes as policy-making, distinct from politics proper. Where he fails to laugh himself out of anthropomorphic thinking is when he suggests the possibility of 'the politics of duty' as prescribed by the historically developed character of a society taken as a whole (28.85–28.89). The problem is not with the corporate identity as such but with the fact that any corporate identity is an abstraction, and abstractions do not sit particularly well with Collingwood's own understanding of duty.

Choices, practices, politics

Oakeshott starts his investigation of the character of human conduct by unpacking the we-do-this construct. Each agent is pursuing his individual satisfactions but, since no action is complete in itself, these are sought in the responses of others. There is, however, a kind of action that does not call for such responses. This is 'fabrication', as opposed to 'performance', of which there are two distinct kinds. The first is the extraction of imagined and wished-for outcomes by force. The second is reserved for art, since here as well immediate responses from others remain unrequited (OHC 31, 55 note 1).

The difference between fabrication and performance resembles the ancient distinction between *tekhnē* and *phronesis*. Collingwood invokes it in order to distinguish art proper, as a practical activity, from 'craft' (PA 15–26). When Oakeshott turns to the art/craft distinction, he questions the correspondent position of Collingwood that meaning is conferred upon action by its purpose: some artefacts acquired the status of a work of art once their initial meanings, conceived in terms of practical purposes for which they had been manufactured, were lost on the way from one context into another (HL 6–7). This transport is presented by Oakeshott as crossing a threshold located in experience 'horizontally', like a river or a border, rather than in any 'vertical', evolutionary manner, like the levels of observation in the tower of reflection. Thus, while some of the metaphors employed in Oakeshott's account of the emergence of modern art clearly echo those of Hegel, ancient Greek temples, for example, become aesthetic artefacts not because their religious meaning is left behind as humanity ascends through history towards Spirit but rather because this is how they appear to the Romans who do not attribute any religiously symbolic significance to them (R 532). And although the passage from the Greek civilization to that of the Romans

is a historical development, it cannot be understood in terms of assignable personalities and their intentions.

In fact, this view would be compatible with at least one possible reading of the so-called Collingwood's what/why paradox: when we know what happened, we already know why it happened (IH 214).[8] We know what happened from knowing the responses to this happening. Focusing on these responses (the 'outside' of the performer's story) rather than on what he was thinking (its 'inside'), we are driven in our investigation by a series of questions meant to clarify the overarching one: '*What* was so-and-so really doing?' This does not contradict either Collingwood's dictum that a proper explanation of action should be concerned with its 'inside', or his insistence on the importance of asking the right questions. Everywhere in his writings Collingwood insists that 'inside' and 'outside' form a unity and cannot be separated, let alone set against each other. It is true that the fundamental premise of Collingwood's question–answer complex is that any performance can be understood only as an answer to a specific question. But it is equally true that in the case of intelligent performance this question – the 'inside' – can only be reconstructed from the answer given plus its context, the 'outside' (A 29–42). Therefore, a satisfactory answer to the question, What really happened? is one that offers an understanding of why it happened. Knowing an agent's purpose is an outcome of inquiry, not its starting-point.

Similarly in action itself. An agent begins not by setting a purpose for himself but by asking questions about his current situation and this involves the 'acceptance of badness in oneself and weakness in relation to other things' (NL 13.29). He then chooses a course of action aimed at his liberation from this condition. Some of these actions are recognized as 'questions' addressed to other agents, to which they offer their own actions as 'answers'. This continuous activity of questioning and answering is embedded into the fabric of social practices which – bringing one back to the point of choosing – delimit the scope of alternatives recognized as open. Hence Collingwood's contention that all history is the history of thought: 'the historian is not interested in the fact that men eat and sleep and make love and thus satisfy their natural appetites; but he is interested in the social customs which they create by their thought as a framework within which these appetites find satisfaction in ways sanctioned by convention and morality' (IH 216).[9]

Something similar is going on in Oakeshott's analysis of human conduct, with 'self-disclosure' being his term for the activity of questioning one's current situation, 'diagnosing' it in terms of its unacceptability, responding by 'prescribing' to oneself the appropriate course of action,

which is, in turn, an invitation for others to respond accordingly. Which they rarely do, failing to read off one's question-invitation correctly and having other invitations to respond to. This creates new situations marked with new unacceptabilities.

Conjoined with this activity of self-disclosure is that of learning. Once learning is institutionalized, it proceeds by offering abridgements. Their function is to abate mystery. What is being abridged is the multiplicity of all conceivable choices, and a by-product of these abridgements are 'practices' (OHC 55). Practices endow the activity of self-disclosure with order. In like manner language orders human self-expression without obliging everyone to say the same thing, still less to do so in chorus. As subscription to the practice of speaking requires saying something substantive, practice and performance are inseparable.

Practices fall into two categories: instrumental and moral. The former provide prudential guidelines for better performances and can be invented or subscribed to by agents that are either not really associated with each other or joined in the pursuit of common purpose. The latter are concerned with acting only in terms of its impact on other agents. Both can be abridged further to make action still more determinate. Thus, in the case of instrumental practices, we end up with all sorts of 'texts', all the way down to cookery-books, and, in the case of moral practices, with vernacular moral 'languages' that acquire their shape from the nodal points of moral rules and duties (66–7).

For Oakeshott, as for Collingwood, the difference between moral rules and duties is in the degree of strictness imposed by them upon human conduct:

> What a moral practice intimates as, in general, proper to be said or done, a moral rule makes more explicit in declaring what it is *right* to do. … Where it is recognized as a *rule*, the conduct which will be taken to subscribe to it is more exactly determined, there may be circumstantial 'exceptions' to be taken into account, and the requirements of this rule may have to be reconciled with those of another. But where … it is recognized to be a *duty*, what is due relates to assigned persons; it is spelled out to leave little room for honest hesitation, and utterance is both required and required to be exact subscription. (67)

Yet the two accounts are not identical. In Oakeshott the exactness of duty is derived not from individuality but from further specification of the fabric of human association in terms of 'offices' and corresponding roles performed by the occupants of those (67).

Thus, importantly for the understanding of the difference between Oakeshott's and Collingwood's conceptions of law (to be discussed in detail later), whereas in Collingwood the performance of one's duty has about it an air of release from the entanglement of rules, Oakeshottian 'duty' is firmly placed in the context of practices composed of rules. Still, there is one further step in Oakeshott which brings him closer to Collingwood, that from self-disclosure to 'self-enactment'.

The transition is made by what Oakeshott believes to be the only route available – justification of action, when the moral discourse is concerned with excuse for an action already performed and reacted to (78). When responding to allegations of non-performance of duty or violation of rule, an agent may appeal not only to his understanding of his situation but also to the 'sentiment' in which an action has been performed. By doing so he escapes, as it were, the court where he can be pronounced guilty to stand in front of another, where his conduct can be condemned as shameful. At this point diagnosis of one's situation includes the acceptance of not only 'weakness in relation to other things', but also 'badness in oneself', and what matters is not the severity or exactness of penalty, but the very appropriateness of 'judging'. Self-enactment is an assertion of concrete individuality, and by insisting on being a concrete individual and not merely an agency of self-disclosure one invites his fellows to take him as they find him, not to judge but to contemplate 'with admiration, with reserve, or with indulgence' (77).

However, the difference persists. According to Collingwood, the form of theoretical reason appropriate for the understanding of the performance of one's duty is history. To see what idiom of inquiry is appropriate for the understanding of self-enactment, one has to go back to Oakeshott's account of practice as a mode of experience.

Like all other abstract worlds of ideas, practice is examined in terms of its presuppositions. What is presupposed in practice are the worlds of 'what is' ('existence') and 'to be' ('not yet'). Turning practice into a more coherent world of ideas requires reconciliation of 'what is' and 'to be'. This is done under the category of valuation. The worlds of fact and value, however, are two categorially distinct worlds of ideas which can never be reconciled *as worlds* in the form of 'what is ought to be'. Any reconciliation is possible only in the form of the individual choice to do this rather than that and can be only intermittent. Although an achievement, it is invariably a failure, for every achievement brings into view a new criterion for further action (EIM 288–321). This is what Oakeshott throughout his work refers to as the 'deadliness of doing' or the 'long littleness of life'.

In his discussion of practice in *Experience*, Oakeshott is primarily concerned with individual action. Once this is reduced to the prudential forecasting of results or the application of readymade rules, the basic characteristic of practical experience, its transience, is abandoned: 'Law is the enemy of the moral life; casuistry is the grave of moral sensibility' (301). Beginning with *Rationalism in Politics*, Oakeshott's emphasis shifts towards human associations and his question becomes, whether it is possible 'to be conservative in respect of government and radical in respect of almost any other activity' (R 435).

One characteristic of moral rules and practices composed of them which makes them indispensable for conduct is their familiarity. However, although acquired 'historically', they are not exempt from 'practical' understanding. Every individual action, even if deliberated in self-enactment, in which 'doing is delivered, at least in part, from the deadliness of doing' (OHC 74), entails, insofar as it remains a performance, persuasion directed towards others recognized as capable of making their own choices: 'It is addressed to choosers and its design is [to] evoke a choice' (47). As deliberation (reflection) is conjoined with action (persuasion), so self-enactment is inseparable from self-disclosure and thus from moral practices in subscription to which the latter takes place. Consequently, to understand an agent in self-enactment historically is to confuse the categories of inquiry: 'the short-coming (it is not, of course, error) of a historian who laces his narrative with so-called "moral" judgements is not on account of his concern to understand performances in terms of a *moral* practice, but on account of his concern to understand performances in terms of a practice of any sort' (100–1, note 1). What has to be understood historically is 'substantive performance', but this is an identity, *eventum*, which, as long as it is not an assignable action, is categorially distinct from that of an agent disclosing and enacting himself in the presence of others (107).

I shall discuss substantive performance in more detail later in relation to political deliberation, but what distinguishes political deliberation from any other kind of deliberation can be stated already now. While deliberating his individual choices, an agent may attend to the moral practices he subscribes to not only in terms of their authority but also in terms of their desirability. Yet 'there is no custodian of moral sentiments to whom he and his supporters might present a petition calling for the repeal of modification of the disapproved "virtues", no procedure in which their allegedly more desirable norms of good conduct might be enacted in their place, no way in which such deliberation and advocacy might terminate in an authoritative legislative act' (160). All this is

different in the case of one specific abridgement of moral practice, civility, and human association in terms of this practice, civil association, where agents are neither 'partners or colleagues in an enterprise with a common purpose' nor 'individual enterprisers related to one another as bargainers for the satisfaction of their individual wants' (122).

As a practice civility is composed entirely of explicitly enacted moral rules, laws, and its texture is made still more precise by 'offices' and procedures appropriate for the maintenance of the system of law (*lex*): adjudication, legislation and ruling. *Lex* cannot be either established once and for all or deduced from any abstract principle. Therefore it cannot be evaluated either through backward-looking reference to any 'original constitution' or forward-looking estimation of its efficiency. The only criterion is its coherence, but not merely logical coherence, as was the case with the modes of experience, but coherence 'historical', understood as a quest for coherence unfolding within limits established by the authority of civil practice as a whole. The name for the comprehensive conditions of the practice of civility is *respublica*. Given the non-instrumental character of *lex*, adjudicating, legislating and ruling can be related to *respublica* exclusively in terms of authority.

The overall conditions of *respublica*, like those of any other moral practice, may also be considered in terms of desirability and change, and now there are specific offices the occupants of which are authorized to enact, or to resist, proposals deliberated in this manner, that is deliberated politically. Since the substantive wished-for outcome of this kind of deliberation is an act of legislation, its other facet, persuasion, reveals itself. This persuasion does not need to be addressed to legislators directly, but since legislation is the only way of introducing change without undermining the authority of *respublica*, political deliberation cannot question the authority of the office of legislators itself.

Thus politics is the activity of deliberation and persuasion meant to bring about change, or to resist projected change, in the conditions of *respublica*:

> Politics is thinking and speaking about a rule of civil intercourse which has been notionally resolved from being an authoritative prescription into a conclusion in order that what it prescribes may be distinguished from its authority and thus be made available to be considered in terms of its desirability; or it is thinking and speaking in order to reach a conclusion which may then be translated into a rule by an authoritative act. (165)

Since *respublica* does not specify substantive performances of the agents who subscribe to its conditions, its overall coherence cannot be brought about by any single act of legislation. At any given moment only a limited number of components of practice can be chosen for examination and then put back into place in amended form so as to increase (or not to decrease) the overall coherence of the whole. Since this whole is a vernacular moral language, 'there are etymological decencies and syntactical proprieties to be taken account of even if they are themselves indirectly modified in the new expressions proposed for use'. Therefore politics, far from being a routine engagement of *cives*, requires the mastery of the language of civility and a lively political imagination that recognizes situations calling for changes 'before they are half over the moral horizon':

> And although this engagement of caring for the conditions of a civil association may seem less demanding, as it is certainly less exciting, than that of deliberating the policy and conducting the affairs of an enterprise association, it calls for so exact a focus of attention and so uncommon a self-restraint that one is not astonished to find this mode of human relationship to be as rare as it is excellent. (180)

In fact, being appropriate only for civil association, it is not to be found in actually existing states at all. The place of politics within such ambiguous associations as states or international society still has to be considered. However, this rough outline allows for asking further, more specific questions which require consideration on the way to world politics.

Politics and poetry

Politics, then, is the activity of promoting or resisting change in the conditions of a human association. In Collingwood, it is the process of conversion from one condition into another, both constituting the body politic, the state. In Oakeshott, it belongs to the civil condition only, while the modern European state is never itself a civil association. Two interrelated questions can be raised immediately. How, in Collingwood, can one establish the directedness of the process of political conversion? What is the practical value of the Oakeshottian ideal character of an activity 'as rare as its excellent', if it is not to be found in what *we* understand by politics?

Both questions are explicitly related to each other in Collingwood's papers and lectures prepared shortly prior to and immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War. Philosophy, according to their overall argument, cannot issue direct prescriptions to practice, but then, practice itself is a twofold engagement, resting on 'a conviction that the problems may be solved, and determination that they should be solved' (EPP 168). The problem with liberalism is that, with all its optimism regarding the former task, it repeatedly fails to provide for the latter. In this sense, Fascism and Nazism are its exact opposites. In them, social transformation is wedded to the call 'to think with one's blood', not least because, rather than providing a reasoned conviction that the problems are soluble, they substitute determination for reason. In what could be a reference to either Schmitt or Heidegger, Collingwood wrote, in 1939: 'There was once a very able and distinguished philosopher who was converted to Fascism. As a philosopher, that was the end of him. No one could embrace a creed so fundamentally muddle-headed and remain capable of clear thinking' (A 158). The proper task of philosophy was to give reasons for the intelligibility of the world. But to transform the world in accordance with this idea, liberalism needed to regain its 'punch', and this was the task of practice, which, in turn, could only hope to stand up to this task by achieving some rapprochement with theory considered historically.

Collingwood traces the troubled relationship between knowledge and will to the beginning of the Western philosophical tradition, but assigns special importance to the overall architectonics of the three Kantian critiques:

> In the first critique (*Critique of Pure Reason*) where Kant is inquiring into the metaphysical foundations of physical science or knowledge of nature, his doctrine is that we can know only a phenomenal world which we make in the act of knowing it. In the second (*Critique of Practical Reason*), where he is inquiring into the metaphysical foundations of moral experience, his doctrine is that in moral experience we know our own minds as things in themselves. In the third (*Critique of Judgement*), his doctrine is that the thing in itself which underlines the phenomena of nature has the character of mind: so that what we know in our practical or moral experience is of the same kind as what we think, but cannot know, in our theoretical experience as students of natural science (IN 118).

Anyone who was determined to retain the critical thrust of Kantian thinking, whether or not he agreed with Kant's specific premises or

conclusions, had to set one task for himself: 'since I admit that we can and do think the thing in itself I must make up my mind exactly *how* we think it and what we think it is' (120). Collingwood's own answer to the 'How' question was – historically; to the 'What' question – the absolute presuppositions of different ages and peoples. Throughout his arguments of this period, he resists any temptation to shirk the problem of man's confrontation with the world of 'dead matter' rather than to resolve it. For example: 'The inanimate world of the physicist is a dead weight on Bergson's metaphysics; he can do nothing with it except to try to digest it in the stomach of his life-process; but it proves indigestible' (141). What is at stake in man's engagement with nature is nothing less than man's freedom. This can only be achieved if 'epistemological discussions and the old controversy between realism and idealism' fall into the background, giving way to the reconciliation of the ideas of evolution and history. This is what the idea of conversion stands for. The clue to it is the purposeful character of all action that makes historical understanding, as re-enactment of the 'living past', possible.

Oakeshott clearly appreciates the character of Collingwood's theoretical engagement, interpreting it, in his review of *The Idea of History*, as an attempt to provide the 'fourth critique', critique of historical reason. However, for him, as I shall demonstrate in more detail shortly, history, considered on its own terms, cannot have intentional action as its subject-matter. The 'individuals' of history are events, not personalities. At the same time, the philosophical conclusion of this inquiry is that in historical understanding, although its subject is a kind of 'dead matter' (the past which is 'dead' for the world of practice), there is no place for necessity.

But how does this conclusion translate into the world of human conduct so as to become an affirmation of human freedom? Does it have to, given that any theoretical communication between history and practice is impossible? Or is it merely the case that history offers an escape from the 'deadliness' of practical doing, without 'converting' or 'digesting' this deadliness into anything else? Experience, then, remains fundamentally fragmented, and so does 'mankind' in the metaphor of the conversation of mankind; which is to say that 'conversation' does not have any significant meaning, providing neither conviction nor determination for conduct.

My argument is that Oakeshott follows Hegel's 'objectivist' critique of Kant in demanding that human freedom has to be transformed from a mere postulate of the human condition into the actually existing

human experience. Given that, under the conditions of modernity, there is more to human freedom than practical freedom, as there is more to human conduct than the world of practice, this transformation takes place not through history but through conversation, and this conversation can be traced both in conduct generally and in civil association. Here poetry plays a special role.

4
Poetry

The idea of politics presented so far opens up a possibility for the discussion of world politics but as yet cannot be directly followed up by it. The possibility is open because politics is not tied conceptually to any entity. It is meaningful mostly in relation to the choice between two distinct conditions, enterprise and civil associations (Oakeshott) or the state of nature and the state of civility (Collingwood). Thus the question of the actual or possible location of politics in the world of states (or other such institutions) will be put by for the next chapter. The task of the present chapter is to see what exactly is involved in the choice between the two ideal characterizations in terms of which any specific institutions purporting to be 'political' can be understood.

What is at stake is individuals' freedom to make their own choices while subscribing to the conditions of a moral order. This order, and nothing else, is the object of the activity of politics. Being the condition for the satisfaction of unspecified wants, this order cannot be derived from these wants themselves. Also, it is not an entity but an activity the quality of which can only be revealed in the individual subscription to its conditions. Politics is either the activity of thinking and speaking about this order in terms of its desirability (Oakeshott) or that of establishing and maintaining it, in which case its desirability is already ascertained (Collingwood). But what are the criteria, if any, by which such desirability can be judged?

Here it is not enough to say that only that order is desirable which allows for the enjoyment of concrete individuality as it reveals itself through the performance of one's duty (Collingwood) or in self-enactment (Oakeshott). For Collingwood, to think about order in these terms is to think about it historically: 'to explore a world consisting of things other than myself, each of them an individual or unique agent,

in an individual or unique situation, doing an individual or unique action which he has to do because, charactered and circumstanced as he is, he can do no other' (NL 18.52). For Oakeshott, this calls for the suspension of one's judgement for the sake of the contemplative 'admiration' of others besides oneself (OHC 77).

However, this is not a call for the abandonment of inquiry but rather a conclusion of a critical inquiry different from Collingwood's 'history'. Oakeshottian 'historic' self-enacted individuals may be similar to Collingwood's agents performing their duties in the presence of others. Yet inverted commas indicate the possibility of another kind of history. This other kind of history will not be considered in any significant detail at this stage. However, some rough preliminary distinction between the two kinds of inquiry is needed so as to highlight the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's understanding of the relationship between theory and practice more generally.

In Collingwood, history enters the discussion of politics because without knowledge of the past one cannot understand any present situation. The past, as Collingwood argues in response to Oakeshott's discussion of history in *Experience*, is within the historian's reach since it survives into his present through a series of modifications of social practices. In the abstract it is impossible to separate the past from the present; but for a concrete historian the past becomes identifiable once he faces a modification of practice which is not immediately comprehensible from within that of his own. His immediate evidence of its existence is the difference that this survival of the past makes and therefore, as always, the question, 'What is going on here?' which takes the form of 'What was intended then?' (A 107–15). The past is 'a living past; a past which, because it was thought and not mere natural event, can be re-enacted in the present and in that re-enactment known as past' (IH 158).

For Oakeshott, such living past may 'afford us a current vocabulary of self-understanding and self-expression' (OH 21) while its survivals 'are *legenda*, what is "read" and what may be read with advantage to ourselves in our current engagements' (18–19). This is the 'practical' past: 'A recorded past is no more than a bygone present composed of the footprints made by human beings actually going somewhere but not knowing (in any extended sense), and certainly not revealing to us, how they came to be afoot on these particular journeys' (36). The survivals it offers cannot attain the status of 'facts' because their propensity to point towards a possible future 'may make it worthwhile to corrupt the record, to see that it gets lost or to destroy it' (19). The world approaching its past in the idiom of practice deals with it as with a 'practical' man whom it

expects 'to talk sense and have something to say apposite to its plebeian "causes" and engagements', whereas for the historian, the past is feminine: 'He loves it as a mistress of whom he never tires and whom he never expects to talk sense' (R 182).

What is proposed here is not merely a defence of a 'genuinely historical' knowledge but a view of human life in which the claims of practice are recognized as being conditional and therefore questionable and in this distinguished from the view of practice that postulates an agent 'endowed with a capacity for free, "transcendent", purposive activity', whose 'sole concern is to "live"; that is, to seek and enjoy his identity in the exercise of this capacity', for whom 'the meaning of everything he encounters, as of everything he fabricates and every action he performs, must be its propensity to illuminate, to promote or to hinder that pursuit' (OH 23). This understanding might not be possibly 'questioned, confirmed or refuted', its universe of discourse 'must itself be nothing else than an object of practical concern, and the engagement of making and elucidating this claim in respect of it can be no more or other than an action performed by the claimant in pursuance of a current practical purpose' (25).

However, a lesser claim on behalf of practical understanding – that it is primordial and inescapable – can be considered:

> The contentions here are that practical understanding is that in which a human being awakes to consciousness; and that, while other modes of understanding may be concerned with objects of other kinds than those which compose the present-future of practical engagement, such objects are conceptually constructed out of those which belong to practical understanding and unavoidably reflect the modality of the materials out of which they are constructed. In short, all modes of understanding have an intrusive, qualifying component of an original practical understanding which may never be excluded. … Moreover, this practical understanding may be recognized as unique in being universal to mankind and a condition of survival. (25–6)

This closely matches Collingwood's understanding of selfhood to be outlined in the first section of this chapter. It is against the background of such understanding that he defends his idea of human freedom. In Oakeshott, and this will be the theme of the second section, this view is qualified, if not rejected altogether: 'What we ordinarily perceive … is a much more messy affair in which we come and go somewhat

inconsequentially between a variety of universes of discourse. And as for priority, some of our earliest experiences are not practical, governed by usefulness, but poetic and governed by delight' (25–6, note 8). Accordingly, the 'so-called "priority" of practical understanding and of the subject and objects which compose the present-future of practical engagement is at best circumstantial, not logical; in relation to other modes it is obtrusive, not intrusive' (26–7). This obtrusiveness has to be insisted upon. Any engagement of understanding 'emerges in a choice to undertake this inquiry and not another … each has a meaning as a constituent of the *Lebenswelt* of the agent concerned' (27). Yet this cannot deny the historically acquired disposition for being engaged with the world differently, 'historically', 'aesthetically', 'religiously' or 'scientifically'. All such engagements may be distractions from practice, but 'as categorially distinct modes of understanding they cannot be subordinate to practical understanding, the circumstantial priority of which gives it no superior status. Their relationship to it and to one another is conversational, not argumentative' (28–9). In fact, practice itself is shaped by this conversation insofar as 'good behaviour is what it is with us because practical enterprise is recognized not as an isolated activity but as a partner in a conversation … in which all universes of discourse meet' (R 491).

Accordingly, there are at least two kinds of 'freedom' or 'identity'. The ones that exist in practice and those shaped by the conversation of mankind conducted in the voices of practice, history or science. Oakeshott's account of practical freedom is not that different from, albeit not identical with, that of Collingwood. But what may be called 'conversational' freedom is different. The highest degree of the former is usually referred to as 'autonomy'. The highest expression of the latter is 'poetry'. Since they are categorially distinct, one cannot be derived from the other. Nevertheless, poetry, although itself necessarily ignorant of 'truth' or 'moral excellence', offers a criterion by which the achievements of practical freedom can be questioned because what is intimated in poetry is individuality achieved through unusual exactness in subscribing to a certain 'language', which in turn does not have any settled form in separation from substantive utterances that shape it. Whereas for Collingwood, 'there is nothing that a poet is trying to say; he is trying simply to speak' (EPM 200), for Oakeshott, what is said in poetry is inseparable from how it is said. Poetic utterance is 'authentic' like no other performance is. In this authenticity lies its importance for the understanding of human experience generally.

Before presenting all this in greater detail and in closer relation to politics, it is important to note that Collingwood also attempts to establish

a standpoint from which to question the directedness of the agent's free will. Like the state in his account of politics, individual consciousness appears in this attempt as a 'mill-race' that drives the activity of self-determination through history. Oakeshott's investigation of historical inquiry provides a different image, that of a 'dry wall'. I shall use these two images in turn to revisit Collingwood's and Oakeshott's accounts of both action and contemplation, now in view of highlighting their conceptions of freedom.

The mill-race

For Collingwood, politics is the process of the historical conversion of one condition of human life into another, more specifically, into the condition of civility. Yet the admission that 'we need not hope ever to reach it' poses a problem. To retain an idea of progress, either in theory or in practice, without a preconceived idea of a final destination, one has to proceed on the basis of what seems to be a mere assumption: 'So far from apologizing … for assuming that there is such a thing as the tradition of philosophy, to be discovered by historical study, and that this tradition has been going on sound lines, to be appreciated by philosophical criticism, I would maintain that this is the only assumption that can be legitimately made' (EPM 224–6).

Historical study, however, is not merely an intellectual pastime but a form of theoretical reason appropriate for the understanding of the highest form of practical reason, the performance of one's duty, and as such it cannot be content with the critical interpretation of the philosophical tradition or actions performed in the past. Both the past and the future are interesting insofar as they respectively intimate the necessities and the possibilities hidden in the present. Once historical understanding eschews the naturalistic conception of the necessities imposed upon human action by the past, it introduces the possibility of the continuous re-enactment of man's social environment as an experience of freedom:

> A healthy man knows that the empty space in front of him, which he proposes to fill up with activities for which he accordingly now begins making plans, will be very far from empty by the time he steps into it. It will be crowded with other people all pursuing activities of their own. Even now it is not as empty as it looks. It is filled with a saturate solution of activity, on the point of beginning to crystallize out. There will be no room left for his activity, unless he can so design this that it will fit into the interstices of the rest. (IH 316)

Put differently, rational action entails thinking about one's situation as constituted by other actors, and, although any situation consists entirely of thought, one's own and other people's, it cannot be changed by a voluntaristic change of mind: 'The freedom that there is in history consists in the fact that this compulsion is imposed upon the activity of human reason not by anything else, but by itself. … The hard facts of the situation, which it is so important … to face, are the hard facts of the way in which [one] conceives the situation' (316–17). Thus Collingwood's twofold contention, that philosophical thinking is historical thinking and all history is the history of thought, presents him with the task of accounting for the reality of others which also has to be brought into line with his evolutionist understanding of politics.

Action

This task Collingwood attempts to fulfil in the first part of *The New Leviathan*, which traces man's awakening to consciousness and then his evolution towards theoretical reason and historical understanding in particular. This adventure begins as an ordeal experienced by a creature born, as it were, into the fuzzy, undifferentiated mass of sensual experience, possessing a rudimentary language (discourse) in which to express his ambiguous feelings. Becoming conscious of a feeling coincides with naming it in this crude language and also with giving this particular sensation an edge, a boundary of meaning, and thus breaking the totality of one's immediate here-and-now, as well as the totality of one's discourse, into a manifold of specialized abstractions.

The experience in which feeling is first infected with the beginnings of thought is defined as 'appetite' and it falls into two types, 'hunger' and 'love' (7.1–7.69; 8.1–8.12). Hunger arises out of a feeling of weakness which, because it is not yet associated with any particular way of eradicating it, seems to pervade the whole of the world and calls for an equally obsessive response: 'the heaping up of "Power after power" in oneself' (8.51). This, as yet, has nothing to do with fear (as it does in Hobbes whom Collingwood is quoting), for a hungry self is not yet aware of the existence of others and imagines the whole of the world in its own image: 'The first notion of a god which arises untaught in every man's mind is much older than fear. It is born of hunger. It is the notion of what a hungry man is pursuing: the infinitely magnified image of himself. … No religion quite forgets that, whatever else its God may be, he is first and foremost the infinite satisfaction of man's hunger: man himself become omnipotent' (8.28–8.29). Omnipotent maybe he is, but he is also undefined, blended, as it were, back into the immediacy of his

initial here-and-now enormously enlarged and, according to some versions of Idealism, awaiting to be transformed through thought to subsume the totality of experience: 'a divine event [located in the future] whereby thought shall not only return into the womb but there digest its own skeleton' (7.67).

Love, in contrast, requires a specialized self but also carries with it an expectancy of a kind, understood as an evolution from some actual condition towards an ideal one: 'The actual self of love is a self with which you are dissatisfied because it is *lonely*. The ideal self of love is a self which has achieved a relation with something other than itself … of such a kind that the dissatisfaction is removed' (8.16). Love is directed not towards one's self infinitely enlarged, but towards a relation with an object it can practically create, a not-self. Now a variety of new, explicitly relational experiences is introduced. Thus 'love turns into fear when a man starts thinking of the not-self no longer as existing for the satisfaction of his own appetites but as having an independent character of its own: as being, so to speak, *alive*'; when 'a lover finds the object of his love no longer content with the passive role of accepting adoration, but behaving like a real person or whatever it is' (10.3–10.32). This is when man becomes 'healthy', that is, begins to realize that others have reality of their own which might be quite different from the one fancied by him in his initial solitude. Characteristically, this recognition of the reality of the not-self engenders what Collingwood presents as the state of war fought on two fronts: 'You have to fight not only the victorious not-self but the self which has been frightened into treachery. The renewal of the war against the not-self is *anger*: the renunciation of the cowardly self is *shame*' (10.48).

At the same time, this ongoing warfare implies the plurality of the possible not-selves of love. It is only through this recognition of plurality that appetites are converted into specific desires, which are always directed towards one possible satisfaction among many and thus imply valuation, the notion of goodness and the possibility of choosing. A self which has reached this stage in its development, so that it can recognize the possibility of doing otherwise, is free. It is constituted by its awakening to its freedom, whereas everything that precedes this awakening (e.g., immediate sensations and appetites not yet converted into desires) is the apanage of this self. Thus a plank constitutes a boat while a mooring is only its apanage and, although both may be seen as belonging to this boat, the nature of this belonging is different (4.14–4.16). Historical understanding begins only at that level at which humans are already constituted as free actors: 'The world of Nature … is as real as you will; but

it is not history, it is the background of history. … For twentieth-century thought the problems of history are the central problems: those of Nature, however interesting they may be, are only peripheral' (18.91–18.92).

Thus Collingwood believes that he has overcome the futile expectation of the 'divine event' of thought's absolute reconciliation with immediate sensual reality by establishing the unity of the worlds of nature and history or the symbiosis of immediate consciousness and abstractions (7.62–7.66). Yet there is a price to be paid for this symbiosis when it comes to the theory of society or politics.

Contemplation

The central character of Collingwood's social theory is a self situated within the web of concrete intersubjective relationships, 'love', seeking highly specialized satisfactions from concrete non-selves each of whom is 'accessibly lodged in the world, an "immanent" god whose many addresses the worshipper knows, with whom he can take tea, and whom he can hope to find about his path and about his bed'. Yet, insofar as these concrete intersubjective relationships originate in the abstract notion of subjectivity, 'hunger', they are tainted with the 'fatally transcendent' religion of unsatisfied love, whose practitioner 'cries into the dark and gets no echo because there is nothing there' (8.38). This religion has found its concrete historic expression in Christianity, which continuously reproduces the war on two fronts, with anger directed at gods and shame at one's sinful self. It can also be found earlier, in Plato's doctrine of the tripartite soul, where humans are already pictured as inevitably passing through 'anger' (or more generally, 'passions') on their way from appetites to reason (10.1–10.63).

Collingwood is clearly dissatisfied with this image and wants to replace it with a 'religion of dependence' which would put hunger into commission so that 'the one final absolute satisfaction for which appetite in its primary form is the quest is cut up into an infinite number of partial, temporary satisfactions'. However, his own tripartite evolutionary conception of action, as guided by the standards of utility, rightness and duty, mirrors the initial image, as does his political theory (to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter) where he resorts to 'contentment' with what falls short of perfection (8.59). This may well be a recognition of the 'necessities' present in historical understanding in the form of the discursive practices shaping the ways of thinking about one's particular situation or human condition in general. As such, this recognition would be consistent with Collingwood's understanding of the 'hard facts' of any given situation. What it is less consistent with,

is his assumption about the evolutionary character of the European philosophical tradition, at least if evolution is understood as promoting the 'religion of dependence'. This, perhaps, is best seen in Collingwood's treatment of imagination as one way of exploring the possibilities of a current way of thinking about the world and also going beyond this way of thinking.

Collingwood's major concern in the *Principles of Art*, where the discussion of imagination is taking place, is to distinguish artistic performance from two other conceptions of creation. The first is Plato's idea of craftsmanship, which, both in its human and divine forms, entails a distinction between a vision of a thing as it really is and an activity of copying an image thus visualized by means of 'making' (PA 15–17). This is 'technical theory' inappropriate for any human activity. The artist is certainly not making copies of some ideal things or worlds, he is creating, but in a specifically human manner, distinct from another possible idea of creation, appropriate only for God who creates out of nothing (128–30).

The artist's 'material' is the world of practice. Collingwood examines the situatedness of human experience in connection with 'feeling' so that to ground the character of artistic experience (as one way of thinking about the possibilities open to human reason) in the conception of imagination not tainted by the 'confusions which in the minds of most [English] philosophers beset the whole idea of sensation' and reality (201). Now he re-arranges the Humean distinction between ideas and impressions into a triad: 'bare feeling, below the level of consciousness', 'feeling of which we have become conscious' and 'feeling which, in addition to becoming conscious of it, we have placed in its relation to others' (213). These, as in Hume, are distinguished in terms of their 'vivacity', but in a manner different from Hume's. Both 'bare' and 'relational' feelings are 'strong', but whereas the former controls us, the latter is under our control due to the activity of 'intellection'. The 'feeling of which we have become conscious' is transitory, fleeting and feeble. The 'bare feeling' is impression proper, the other two are ideas but different in kind. Impressions are converted into ideas by the activity of consciousness. At the level of experience at which this conversion occurs, further bifurcation is taking place: 'there is a distinction between that which effects the conversion and that which had undergone it. Consciousness is the first of these, imagination is the second'. Thus 'imagination is a distinct level of experience at which the life of thought makes contact with the life of purely psychical experience'. In this manner 'ideas of imagination' provide the data for the intellect. On this characteristically transient level of

experience relations between them do not yet exist and every such idea is singular and unique, 'a simple indivisible unity: a sheer here-and-now' (215).

Intellectually mature individuals are differently situated in the totality of human experience and therefore they differently come into contact with the purely physical experience and differently convert it into the ideas of intellect. Those whose attention is directed towards history, for example, will experience 'historical imagination'; the same applies to 'political' or 'artistic' individuals. Accordingly, 'beauty' is no longer a mistaken conception of truth held by the artist (as opposed to philosopher) but the only truth there is for him as an artist. Thus Collingwood explicitly retracts his own 'youthful follies': 'on the poet's behalf it may be replied, to some one who argues that a lady cannot be both adorably virtuous and repellently vicious, or that the world cannot be both a paradise and a dust-heap, that the arguer seems to know more about logic than he does about ladies, or about the world' (288).

At this point Collingwood's view of experience gets closer to Oakeshott's. Yet differences remain. All Collingwood's individuals are located in the practical experience. It is from there that they slip, as it were, into their different imaginative moods, and it is back into practice that they are bound to return. A work of art is born and exists exclusively in the artist's mind so that the music an artist actually enjoys as a work of art is never sensuously experienced at all, it is imagined. What is imagined is the totality of experience available to this particular artist. Any 'work of art proper is a total activity which the person enjoying it apprehends, or is conscious of, by the use of his imagination' (151). But, situated as he is in practice, the artist attends to emotions arising from practical experience and has to express himself through language which is communal experience.

Thus Collingwood's triadic, and also evolutionist, conception of understanding (impression/consciousness/intellection) is matched with a triadic conception of artistic experience (emotion/imagination/expression), and both are underpinned by the idea of the totality of human experience: 'The poet converts human experience into poetry not by first expurgating it, cutting out the intellectual elements and preserving the emotional, and then expressing this residue; but by fusing thought itself into emotion: thinking in a certain way and then expressing how it feels to think in that way' (295). Inasmuch as artistic experience is inseparable from the totality of experience, the business of art 'would be to construct possible worlds, some of which, later on, thought will find real or action will make real' (286).

It is this triadic (and purposeful) conception of artistic experience that Oakeshott explicitly rejects ('but not without consideration'): 'A poet does not do *three* things: first experience or observe or recollect an emotion, then contemplate it, and finally seek a means of expressing the results of his contemplation; he does *one* thing only, he imagines poetically' (R 525). Behind this reformulation lies a different mode of putting into commission 'the one final absolute satisfaction' sought in all experience by cutting it up into an infinite number of partial, temporary achievements.

The dry wall

The question Oakeshott addresses is similar to that of Collingwood, namely, how to relate the idea of human freedom to the 'hard facts' of human condition. For Oakeshott, however, this task appears as doubly challenging because he rejects the hierarchical view of experience in which different modes of self-knowledge succeed each other in an evolutionary progression. Collingwood abandoned the idea of Absolute Knowledge but postulated instead the apanage of pre-conscious condition so that to establish a critical standpoint from which to judge the achievements of the individuals and the quality of the relations between them. Humans are liberating themselves from the dictates of desire and, out of respect for similar efforts in their fellow-beings, should abstain from any attempts, deliberate or inadvertent, to upset this undertaking.

For Oakeshott, this is inadequate as an account of both human freedom and the way humans think about their situations. A human being is born not into 'a world lit only by the flickerings of biological urges from which he escapes with difficulty into agency', learning on the way how to control his unconditional desires 'with the aid of moral practice' (OHC 62–3). He comes straight into the manifold of practices, each with an edge already in place. Human freedom consists not in drawing and re-drawing these boundaries but in learning how to move within and across them while recognizing the authority of practices thus shaped. The resulting image is not that of the mill-race of the evolutionary process of conversion, but rather the dry wall of contingently related performances held together, not by any mortar, but by the magnetic field of the conversation of those performing them. This image, in turn, has a history of its own which spans the whole of Oakeshott's work.

In *Experience*, different modes of experience are deviations from the ideal totality of experience and, as abstractions, they are equidistant from this totality. In 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of

Mankind', 'languages' (the new name for the modes of experience) in which humans speak in their 'conversation' (the meeting-place of the different universes of discourse which takes the place of the postulated totality of experience) do not compose a hierarchy, nor are they 'divergences from some ideal, non-idiomatic manner of speaking, they diverge only from one another' (R 490, 497). There is nothing 'above' the individual universes of discourse but there is also nothing 'below' to ground them in. The utterances they offer 'are not made out of some other, less-defined material (impressions or *sensa*), for no such material is available' (496).

Still, the task is to ascertain the reality of each language and to offer a view of their meeting-place, conversation, where each voice is taken at face-value and 'everything is permitted which can get itself accepted into the flow of speculation' (490). In fact, nothing of value should be excluded from conversation, for an 'excluded voice may take wing against the wind, but it will do so at the risk of turning the conversation into a dispute' (494). The value of the individual utterance cannot be derived from the mere fact of its existence or dominance: the 'insidious vice' of the appropriation of the conversation by one or two voices consists in the fact that 'in the passage of time it takes on the appearance of a virtue' (494). Scepticism may serve as a check against all exclusion, but it cannot help in telling a vice from a virtue, especially so if straightforward appeals to the current consensus are ruled out. Meanwhile, what Oakeshott demands from the different voices in the conversation of mankind – ability to take each other at face-value without endangering the overall constellation – is exactly what is required from the 'historic' self-enacted individuals capable of speaking the language of civility as it should be spoken. So how is this condition met in both cases?

Action

Oakeshottian world is composed of selves which emerge out of possibilities, harden into 'facts', only to dissolve back into the possibilities again. They do so not by coming into contact with some certainties or with doubt, 'but by being kindled by the presence of ideas of another order' (R 489). What 'on occasion is recognized as self is recognized on account of its separating itself from a present not-self: self and not-self generate one another' (495). The self is activity, not something capable of acting, but activity as such which cannot be intrinsically good or bad but is always understood as conducted well or ill in accordance with the intrinsic standards of a given practice: 'to be skilful but with no particular skill, is as impossible to the self as not to be active at all' (496). This

activity Oakeshott calls 'imagining' and it is 'neither the φαντασια of Aristotle, nor is it the "original fancy" of Hobbes, nor is it what Coleridge called "primary imagination", nor is it the "blind but indispensable link" between sensation and thought which Kant called imagination'; it is thought itself in one of its modes, while various not-selves made by it are 'images' (497).

In conduct, self is first and foremost a desiring self, its images are the objects of desires and aversions, while relations between self and not-self are an unavoidable *bellum omnium contra omnes* even when not-selves are other humans recognized as having desires and aversions of their own. In this case, war is carried on by other means, requiring more skill and cunning, but does not entail the genuine recognition of the subjectivity of the not-self. However, conduct constituted exclusively by desiring selves is an abstraction and a merely desiring self is 'an image which remains a mere image and refuses to qualify as "fact" ' (501).

In *On Human Conduct*, an agent inhabits a world of intelligible *pragmata* so that 'when alternatives present themselves to his imagination, he must be able to choose between them and decide upon a performance' (OHC 36). The images thus created qualify as 'facts' inasmuch as an agent composed of beliefs about himself and his situation can move about them without severing the link between belief and conduct. With instrumental practices this link can never be secured in principle, in subscription to moral ones it can never be broken. An agent may subscribe to an instrumental practice because he believes that such subscription can best promote some particular wants of his. These may or may not coincide with the wants of other participants to this practice, for, insofar as the terms of their subscription are set exclusively by the pursuit of their wants, collective or individual, the mode of their association is still that of an enterprise, transactional or cooperative. Each agent, then, should be able to revoke his subscription the moment his wants are satisfied or if he no longer believes they can be satisfied through his participation in this practice. In moral practices, where agents are related exclusively in terms of their recognition of the non-instrumental considerations of conduct, the link between belief and conduct cannot be broken and practices themselves cannot be chosen, precisely because the standards of conduct intrinsic to moral practices are not the matter of beliefs, but what Collingwood would call the 'absolute presuppositions' of these practices, the conditions of their continuous enactment.

Thus, in the case of *respublica* composed entirely of rules, such rules specify 'performances in terms of obligations to subscribe to injunctions' (67). Obligation denotes 'a reason, distinguished from all others,

not for acting, but for subscribing to the conditions specified in a rule; namely, because it is acknowledged to be a rule', that is, understood exclusively in terms of its authority (155). As far as the authority of *respublica* itself is concerned, it matters not whether an agent who recognizes it believes *respublica* to be good or bad, right or wrong. Obligation 'is not to be identified with having a feeling of being obliged or constrained, or even with a belief that one ought to do so; obligations subsist independently of any such beliefs'; they cannot be identified with the habit of obedience, for 'rules are not responded to in acts of "obedience" and habits are not reasons', and it is a mistake 'to identify having such obligation with membership in an association in which such obligations are usually fulfilled'; obligations 'cannot be extinguished by non-fulfilment, whether it be that of one or of many, and they are not denied even in refusal to subscribe' (155–6).

So, in the first instance and in a rather restricted sense, obligation and authority are the 'hard facts' of one's civil condition; they are 'there', insulated from the vicissitudes of the individual beliefs, the way Latin, for example, is there and, even when it is not practised routinely, anyone who wants to read St Augustine in the original has to learn this language and not any other. Yet it is not on account of this 'reality' that a world of conduct composed of merely desiring selves remains an abstraction. After all, Latin is a dead language in which innovation is no longer possible. Even in non-subscription, obligations have to be recognized for what they are, namely, human inventions, the reality of which is revealed only once they are fulfilled (or rejected) through individual performances. The skill of being obligated has to be learnt and it is learnt prior to entering a *respublica*. A self lacking in this skill altogether would be incapable of ascertaining itself as being human, for human conduct, as an activity in which self and not-self reciprocally enact each other, postulates agents who act in accordance with their beliefs (36–7; 157–8).

This link between conduct and belief, in turn, is established and maintained through learning, the most basic capacity of humans (12–14). When the agent recognizes his situation as constituted by others in whom the same capacity for learning is expected, he embarks upon the activities of approval and disapproval. Here, again, he is not merely constrained by the presence of others, by their choices, by previous choices of his own or by his physical strength. All these and similar considerations may have a bearing on the range or the character of his responses to his situation but they do not qualify his freedom to understand (or misunderstand) his situation as an invitation for action, to 'imagine it

different from what it is' and to 'recognize it to be alterable by some action or utterance of his own' (36).

Thus, long before subscribing to the conditions of *respublica* as a *civis*, a human being 'comes to consciousness in a world illuminated by a moral practice and as a relatively helpless subject of it' (63). As he comes along by way of learning, including learning under the conditions of imposed criticism (education), he becomes a 'historic' self-enacted individual capable of recognizing his situation as 'you are shivering' and responding accordingly (52). The actions he chooses to perform are his own (although the way he performs them, well or ill, is conditioned by his competence in subscription to a practice) and their outcome is neither more nor less than he himself in a new situation of his. From this, however, 'it does not follow that what he intends, the meaning of his action, must be a self-gratification. … Agents are related to one another in terms of understandings … they may care for one another because they think of one another. The myth of the necessarily egocentric agent is a denial of agency' (53).

There is some way to go from this distinction between conduct as the world *sub specie voluntatis* and the world *sub specie moris* to the distinction between enterprise and civil associations. Yet it is clear that enterprise and civil associations postulate two different conceptions of human freedom. In enterprise association, freedom is 'conceptually tied to the choice to be and to remain associated' and is threatened every time such association becomes compulsory (158). Accordingly, 'the undertaking to impose this character upon a state whose membership is compulsory constitutes a moral enormity, and it is the attempt and not the deed which convicts it of moral enormity' (MHC 367). In civil association, there is nothing 'to threaten the link between belief and conduct which constitutes "free" agency, and in acknowledging civil authority *cives* have given no hostages to a future in which, their approvals and choices no longer being what they were, they can remain free only in an act of dissociation' (OHC 158).

It is also clear that Oakeshott's conception of practical freedom is related not to the background reality of nature, but to that of the authority of existing practices. To be consistent with this conception of freedom, Oakeshott cannot be content with the reified 'hard facts' of these practices. To remain free, humans have to recognize these practices themselves as alterable by some action or utterance of their own, to imagine them being different. At the very least, there should be a possibility of interpreting these practices differently, and mere doubt offers little guidance here. Where else can it be possibly found?

Acknowledging that most of the civil ideas have their theological analogues, Oakeshott rejects, as does Collingwood, the idea of 'a divine Purpose to which [man's] conduct willy-nilly contributes', but also that of 'a divine Will to which he must submit himself and his conduct or join the party of the devil' (this, according to Collingwood, is an attribute of a god born out of man's primordial 'hunger'). Instead, God may be understood to be a law-giver, 'and the believer is not only necessarily left to subscribe to his obligations as best he may but can do so only in self-chosen actions' (158). As in Collingwood, analogy with religious experience is significant, and in what are perhaps the most moving pages of *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott sketches out an account of it very different from that of Collingwood. For Collingwood, Christianity is a historical expression of the 'fatally transcendent' love directed towards the unattainable not-self which at once infects human experience with hope and the frustrations of shame with oneself and anger at there being nothing to respond. For Oakeshott, what is sought in religious belief 'is not merely consolation for woe or deliverance from the burden of sin, but a reconciliation to nothingness' (83–4). Salvation it offers consists not in the promise of a hereafter but in the intimation of the highest expression of practical freedom related to the highest expression of rule.

Freedom for Oakeshott, as it is for Collingwood, is a matter of degree insofar as it implies 'the quality of being substantively "self-directed" which an agent may or may not achieve and which, when a high degree of it is enjoyed, is properly called "self-determination" or "autonomy" ' (36–7). Moral autonomy has nothing to do with one's ability to make moral choices as a 'gratuitous, criterionless exercise of a so-called "will" (an isolated *meum*) in which a lonely agent simultaneously recognizes or even creates a "value" for which he is wholly responsible and places himself under its command, thus miraculously releasing himself from organic impulse, rational contingency, and authoritative rules of conduct'; it does not require 'some other release from having to recognize a rule of conduct merely in terms of its being a rule; that is, in terms of its authority'. The moral autonomy of an agent 'lies, first, in his character as an agent (that is, in his action or utterance being a response to an understood want and not the consequence of an organic impulse), and secondly, in his action or utterance as self-disclosure and self-enactment in a contingent subscription of his own to the conditions of a practice (which cannot tell him what to do or to say) recognized in terms of its authority' (79).

What is sought in self-enactment, however, is authenticity, as a 'release from the bondage of contingent circumstance' (76), an 'echo of

an imperishable achievement', heard more clearly when an agent is primarily concerned with the sentiments in which he performs this or that action, 'when the valour of the agent and not the soon-to-vanish victory, when his loyalty and fortitude and not the evanescent defeat, are the considerations'. But even thus enacted self is subscribing to a practice, such as *honestum*, and thus remains 'a fugitive; not a generic unity but a dramatic identity without benefit of a model of self-perfection' (84). Religious experience offers such a model:

> Religious faith is the evocation of a sentiment (the love, the glory, or the honour of God, for example, or even a humble *caritas*), to be added to all others as the motive of all motives in terms of which the fugitive adventures of human conduct, without being released from their mortal and their moral conditions, are graced with an intimation of immortality: the sharpness of death and the deadliness of doing overcome, and the transitory sweetness of a mortal affection, the tumult of a grief and the passing beauty of a May morning recognized neither as merely evanescent adventures nor as emblems of better things to come, but as *aventures*, themselves encounters with eternity. (85)

However, a similar echo of durability may be heard in 'the magnitude of the agent's malice and not merely the injuriousness of his action: the grandeur of devilry' (84). On its own, the image of God as a law-giver offers no protection from this. Even divine rules cannot possibly provide a unity which is unconditional, religion itself oscillates between the extremes and 'may be terrible, it may sink to the prose of a merely anticipated release' from 'malignant current condition, or it may rise to a serene acquiescence in mortality and a graceful acceptance of the *rerum mortalia*, joys and sorrows alike transformed'. Yet the image of God originates in the conversation, rather than decrees it, and its dignity lies not only in the recognition of the true character of human condition, nor merely 'in the cogency of the reconciliation it intimates', but also 'in the poetic quality, humble or magnificent, of the images … in which it recalls to us that "eternity is in love with the productions of time" and invites us to live "so far as is possible as an immortal" ' (86).

Thus, the motive of all motives is intimated not in religious belief (here it is only more readily recognized as such), but in the experience of poetry; and it is in poetry that, through imagination, one engages in the activity of contemplation proper.

Contemplation

Oakeshott's account of poetic experience begins, as does Collingwood's, with the rejection of Platonic Rationalism, only it rejects not just the 'technical theory' of art but that tradition of European thought 'in which all activity was judged in relation to the *vita contemplativa*' (R 493), while the supremacy of contemplation was asserted 'on account of its release from the concerns of craftsmanship' (511). Oakeshott does not deny the possibility, nor does he question the desirability of such a release, and he follows tradition in describing this activity as 'contemplation'. What he rejects is rather the possibility of the contemplative *life*.

If human life is illuminated by practices created by human beings themselves, then in contemplation human beings slip into a less structured world of indistinct images following one another in 'lazy association' (513). This individuals can do only by renouncing the authority of practice as a mode of experience. Since participation in the modes of experience, as in moral practices, is involuntary (there is no intelligible experience in-between the modes, as there are no habitable worlds outside all morality), this is a pathological condition which can only be transient and, strictly speaking, cannot be 'achieved' but can only 'happen' due to some distraction from the routine of doing, historic or scientific imagining. The generic name for this distraction is 'wonder' and 'any practical image which, from the unfamiliar circumstances of its appearance, induces wonder may open a door upon the world of contemplation, so long as wonder does not pass into curiosity (*scientia*)' (513). In this sense, contemplation is always a journey into a foreign land and subsists only insofar as the foreignness is not objectified through fabrication.

Thus art, according to Oakeshott, emerged not out of premeditated attempts at creating a work of art but out of the unsought encounters with the foreignness, as when 'the invading Romans were provoked to contemplative delight by the temples and statues of Greece because for them they had no religious-symbolic significance' (532). It became art proper with the dissolution of the pre-modern homogeneity of human condition (if that ever existed), when the activity of an artist could be no longer confused with that of the ancient seer or his counterpart, the gleeman (530). Once this happened, art proper, 'poetry', became the only genuinely contemplative activity. As such, it 'can only have an intermittent fulfilment … there is no *vita contemplativa*; there are only moments of contemplative activity abstracted and rescued from the flow of curiosity and contrivance' (541).

As for the relationship between action and contemplation, certain sentiments in conduct, relationships arrived at in these sentiments partake of the character of poetry, in particular of its unconditional conversability. Unlike all the other voices in the conversation of mankind, in poetry what is being said cannot be separated from how it is said: not only is every performance a perfect subscription to a practice, but practice and performance are invariably one and the same. And although this level of authenticity can never be achieved in human conduct, some uncommon excellence, reminiscent of poetry, may be observed in such undeniably practical experiences as 'moral goodness', friendship or love:

> Loving … is not a duty; it is emancipated from having to approve or to disapprove. … What is communicated and enjoyed is not an array of emotions – affection, tenderness, concern, fear, elation, etc. – but the uniqueness of the self. … Neither merit nor necessity has any part in the generation of love; its progenitors are chance and choice – chance, because what cannot be identified in advance cannot be sought; and in choice the inescapable practical component of desire makes itself felt. (537)

In other words, if authenticity is the criterion of virtuous self-enactment, then in poetry individuals do have an earthly model for it. As for the heroic exploits of characters located on the other side of the spectrum of freedom, despite the wonder excited on occasion by the grandeur of their actions, they disrupt the flow of conversation because in their case self-enactment leads to the unconditional release from the engagements of self-disclosure. Without this return towards self-disclosure, the quality of the agent's motive in self-enactment is perverted: 'although the "virtuousness" of the sentiment in which an alleged wrongful act was performed may sometimes properly be pleaded in an argument to exonerate the agent from blame or penalty, this argument begins with the admission of fault ("qui s'excuse s'accuse", as they say), and never suggests that the wrongfulness of the act is cancelled by the virtuousness of the motive; and, indeed, piety aggravates fraud' (OHC 78).[1] Here one meets, for example, the snake of the Lost Garden recast into a 'slick encyclopaedia salesman'; the architect of the Tower of Babel, who in his revolt against the gods 'is not a petty thief, like Prometheus', but 'the leader of the cosmic revolution whose enterprise is not only doomed to failure but entails the destruction of all the virtues and the consolations of the *vita temporalis*, a destruction of which the "confusion of tongues"

is the emblem'; a character in Dante's *Inferno*: 'a deformed human being, a giant, who out of vanity made war upon heaven and in consequence confounded the conversation of mankind', 'a gibbering idiot forever blowing a tin trumpet: *O anima confusa*' (OH 189).

Thus the extremes are the absolute authenticity of 'delight' and the absolute autonomy of disgrace, intimating the Conversation of Mankind and the Tower of Babel respectively. Between these extremes is the day-to-day conduct of the 'unprofessional guardians' of the vernacular of moral practice, 'who speak it somewhat monotonously but with a care for its intimations of balance, sobriety, and exactness' and whose 'solid gracelessness makes possible the stylist, the hero, the saint, the aristocrat and the vagabond, who, caring only for its intimations of magnificence, are apt to neglect the prosaic pieties which keep barbarism at bay' (OHC 66). And if to prop themselves up in their daily engagements they rely on the historically acquired ways of abridging their highly indeterminate moral practices into a *respublica* whose authority they tend to take for a 'hard fact' of their situation, that is, if they get distracted by what they once learned from the unhindered engagement of imagining their situation as being different, it is not the theorist's business to convict them of reification.

The theorist's task, first, is to show what exactly is involved in a disposition to be radical almost about everything while being conservative in respect of government:

> Since life is a dream, we argue (with plausible but erroneous logic) that politics must be an encounter of dreams, in which we hope to impose our own. Some unfortunate people, like Pitt (laughably called 'the Younger'), are born old, and are eligible to engage with politics almost in their cradles; others, perhaps more fortunate, belie the saying that one is young only once, they never grow up. But these are exceptions. For most there is what Conrad called the 'shadow line' which, when we pass it, discloses a solid world of things, each with its fixed shape, each with its own point of balance, each with its price; a world of fact, not poetic image, in which what we have spent on one thing we cannot spend on another; a world inhabited by others besides ourselves who cannot be reduced to mere reflections of our own emotions. And coming to be at home in this commonplace world qualifies us (as no knowledge of 'political science' can ever qualify us), if we are so inclined and have nothing better to think about, to engage in what the man of conservative disposition understands to be political activity. (R 436–7)[2]

Second, since this recognition of the practical freedom of 'others besides ourselves' is inseparable from the recognition of the authority of rules, in the case of *respublica*, the validation of its authority, when it becomes an explicit engagement, inevitably 'moves up the scale of authorizations', but however 'high' the hierarchy of rules might turn out to be on any given occasion before it 'yields a contingently satisfying conclusion', it will nevertheless culminate, not in a principle, nor in a charismatic personality, but in yet another rule (OHC 151). Hence the image of divine law-giver and also reconciliation to nothingness: 'reconciliation', because in religious belief the scale of authorizations cannot be moved up any further; to 'nothingness', because such understanding of religious authority adds nothing to the character of conduct as a rules-governed engagement.

As a poetic image, however, it intimates an idea of individuality different from that of the world of practice and yet required in that world for one decisive reason: reconciliation to nothingness may keep barbarism at bay but the agent it presupposes cannot *generate* the kind of order he guards. He may wish 'to prosper in a modest sort of way and with as little hindrance and as much help as may be from his fellows' but cannot possibly enter into that elusive Hobbesian 'first covenant' in which there are no assurances but through which alone a commonwealth may be established. This requires a character who 'will not be disposed to accept this low-grade (if gilt-edged) security as the answer to his needs, even if he believes that to refuse it entails almost inevitable dishonour' (HCA 93):

> And since men are apt to make gods whose characters reflect what they believe to be their own, the deity corresponding to this self-understanding is an Augustinian god of majestic imagination, who, when he might have devised an untroublesome universe, had the nerve to create one composed of self-employed adventures of unpredictable fancy, to announce to them some rules of conduct, and thus to acquire convives capable of 'answering back' in civil tones with whom to pass eternity in conversation. (OHC 324)

Yet the individuality of poetic utterance is categorially distinct from the kind of individuality required in practice. The 'shadow-line' passage quoted above seems to suggest that this distinction (between 'a world of fact' and 'poetic image') is due to the transient character of the former and the lasting familiarity ('a solid world of things') of the latter. This, however, is a false distinction, for practical freedom, realized only in a

choice to do this rather than that, is as transient as an instance of poetic contemplation. In one of his earlier essays, written prior to the publication of *Experience*, Oakeshott even considered the possibility, regarded then as an 'immense revolution' in the prevailing view of life, of subverting the dichotomy of life and art:

> In youth, before we have consented to take life as it is, before prudence has taught us the unwisdom of living ahead of ourselves, before we have succumbed to the middle-class passion for safety, regularity and possession, we believe that the most important thing is to preserve, at all costs, our integrity of character, for we believe that men, and not the things they create, are permanent and lasting. The length of art does not dismay us, for we are not conscious of the briefness of life. Indeed, this discrepancy between the length of art and that of life is altogether false, depending, as it does, upon the world's notion that art is to be found in galleries and libraries or anywhere except in a personal sensibility. … [It] is easier to know all about a picture than to achieve a sensibility for it. (RP 33–4)

This approximation of the disposition of youth to artistic sensibility is what led Oakeshott to state that religion and art alike are 'practical experience pressed to its conclusion', in which all other attempts at reconciling the worlds of 'what is' and 'not yet' in the form of 'what is ought to be', attempts, that is, 'to establish the harmony, unity or coherence of the world of practical experience – attempts such as politics or morality constitute – are swallowed up and superseded' (EIM 309, also 296–7).

When, in *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott describes religion as 'a reconciliation to nothingness', this does not constitute any significant change in his view of either religion or practice. The nothingness of the world of practice is its 'deadliness of doing', and reconciliation here is a graceful acceptance of the *rerum mortalia* rather than transcendence. 'The Voice of Poetry', on the other hand, is presented as 'a belated retraction of a foolish sentence in *Experience and Its Modes*' (R xii) in which poetry was identified with practice. Poetry is contemplation and there is no contemplative life.

After the introduction of rules and practices in Oakeshott's later work, this distinction becomes clearer. It hinges upon the difference between poetic and practical responses to the evanescent character of every human achievement. Poetic response is fabrication, in practice only performances are allowed. If rules and practices inevitably infect the world of practice with their pastness, thus turning it into a solid world of things, then the only appropriate theoretical response to this predicament would consist in attending to this world as a world composed of performances

understood under the category of the past; and this would require a shift from ethics to history, while both are recognized as the categorially distinct idioms of inquiry or languages in the conversation of mankind.

Put differently, the voice of poetry, through its unusual conversability, may awaken agents to the diversity of the universes of discourse composing the conversation of mankind but it does not call for the aestheticization of this conversation. Escapes offered by science or history remain 'distractions from distraction by distraction',[3] experiences of being kindled by the presence of ideas of another order, none of which, however, is exempt from the conditionality of its own. Nevertheless, and this is what I want to argue in the next chapter, both politics and historical inquiry are akin to poetry in one important respect. Unlike other universes of discourse, poetry does not possess a settled language of its own. One cannot be sure that a 'golden meadow' is indeed and always a 'sunlit field of grass', and 'plum blossom' invariably stands for 'charity' (R 528). Similarly, a historian, although interested in the practices (languages) created by humans through their transactional engagements, attends to them as something quite different from the settled, immutable survivals of intentional actions of assignable personalities:

> An historically understood past is … the conclusion of a critical inquiry … in which authenticated survivals from the past are dissolved into their component features in order to be used for what they are worth as circumstantial evidence from which to infer a past which has not survived; a past composed of passages of related historical events (that is, happenings, not actions or utterances, understood as outcomes of antecedent happenings similarly understood) and assembled as themselves answers to questions about the past formulated by an historian. (OH 36)

What is less obvious is that through politics the structures of *respublica* are similarly unsettled into an instance of *civitas*. To see how this is done, an idea of 'civilization' has to be explored; and here, again, the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's accounts of it is instructive and hinges upon the already outlined difference in their understanding of freedom.

Poetry and civilization

Despite the important differences between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's understandings of politics, central to both of them is the idea of human freedom. Both historical consciousness and political action are possible

because the 'facts' of the human condition, however 'hard' they may appear to an agent deliberating some imperfect and inconclusive bargain with the future, are recognized as amenable to transformation through human action because they are human inventions. To recognize the human condition as a human invention is to recognize it as composed of others besides ourselves and to accept the reality of these others as, perhaps, the least conditional of all the conditions to be taken into account in conduct.

Here the difference between Collingwood's and Oakeshott's accounts of this reality is most explicit, culminating in two images of deity. Oakeshottian god as a law-giver is also a somewhat reckless 'Augustinian god of majestic imagination', a duality corresponding to that of self-disclosure and self-enactment. Collingwood's counterpart to this image is a demanding god of duty:

> So art and play have something in them which though not really divine is a likeness of divinity; and God may be pictured as an artist, or as playing, with far more verisimilitude than as a scientist or a business man. Aristotle actually raised the question whether play might not be considered a good definition of God's activity; and the only reason why it cannot is that the *sit pro ratione voluntes* of play is below the claims of expediency and right, the action of God above them. (SM 105)

This image was to be significantly revised by Collingwood towards the end of his life, but what was never to change was the attitude, the upbound thrust of human existence grounded in the evolutionary conception of both action and understanding expressed in the image of the scale of forms and the corresponding idea of the seriousness of man's tasks grounded in the understanding of man's original situation:

> The facts of human infancy are dirtier and less picturesque, perhaps, than the fancies of Rousseau; but they are the safer foundation on which to build a science of the relations linking a man to his fellow men. … A man is born a red and wrinkled lump of flesh having no will of its own at all, absolutely at the mercy of the parents by whose conspiracy he has been brought into existence. That is what no science of human community, social or non-social, must ever forget. (NL 23.92–23.97)

This image of human condition is reflected in Collingwood's understanding of civilization, where man's upbringing into the condition of

civility is explored through his relations with nature, members of his own society and 'strangers'. Underneath this exploration is yet another triad, that of civilization as an ideal, as an actually existing practice and as the process of approximation of the latter to the former. What drives this process is the idea of universal society implied in every particular society. The historic expression of this driving force is the state, polarized into the rulers and the ruled, related to each other by the process of law-giving. Oakeshott's idea of civilization appears as a rejection of every single point in this construction. Civilization is the transformation of 'good conduct' into 'civil conduct'. This transformation is never complete, but this incompleteness does not call for contentment with what falls short of perfection. In a sense, it *is* a kind of perfection.

5
Civilization

The previous chapter outlined two different modes of contemplation and action. In the first mode, both are powered by the 'mill-race' of the individual consciousness. In the second, human practices are likened to the 'dry wall' composed of contingently related occurrences. In both cases, politics is concerned with the possibility of change, while change is recognized as being possible due to the 'historical' understanding of human associations as human inventions. Yet politics in the 'mill-race' mode (Collingwood) is an activity which brings about the progressive conversion of individuals and their associations to the condition of civility, while politics in the 'dry wall' mode (Oakeshott) is a procedure meant to increase (or maintain) the overall coherence of the already existing practice of civility. This way or another, politics is meaningful only in relation to civility and the question of this chapter is that of the location of the practice of civility in the world of states.

To begin with, the different modes of politics presuppose different location of civility vis-à-vis the state. In Oakeshott, the story begins with the dissolution of the morality of communal ties into that of individuality and the subsequent transformation of 'community' into 'association' (HL 18–24; R 364–9; OHC 233–42). In a world thus being transformed successful entrepreneurs were accompanied by displaced labourers, and enthusiastic self-directed men by dispossessed believers (OHC 275–9; HL 24–7; R 370–81). Alongside the individual proper stood the individual *manqué*, and around these two characters modern European states organized themselves in terms of *societas* and *universitas* respectively, a distinction corresponding to the ideal characters of civil and enterprise associations.

Within the modern European states, which acquired their power by settling and guarding 'frontiers to their areas of authority, marked upon

accurate maps, which none may pass without scrutiny and perhaps only by permission' (OHC 194), the relation between *societas* and *universitas* is never in terms of either/or. The very term 'state' is a 'masterpiece of neutrality', an attempt not to grant unconditional allegiance to any of the modes of association (233). But 'a modern European state at war, whatever the strength of its disposition to retain its character as civil association, is indisputably turned in the direction of association in terms of a substantive purpose'. Having turned into an *universitas*, it turns its citizens into individuals *manqués* and thus perpetuates acquired purposeful disposition, for lessons learnt in wars are remembered when hostilities subside: 'The model of a state understood as association in terms of a substantive purpose and of its apparatus of ruling has always been sought and found in the image and organization of a state bent upon conquest or of a city besieged' (272–4).[1]

In Collingwood, 'particular society' corresponds to *societas*, while the counterpart of *universitas* is a territorially located 'community'. 'Community' and 'society' are brought together by the 'body politic', the state, through the activity of politics. Every particular 'society' is potentially universal, but the realization of this potential through politics would require the territorial expansion of the 'body politic' and thus the creation of the global state. In Oakeshott, politics belongs to *societas* only. Politics, rather than requiring the expansion of *societas*, let alone the state, is practised by way of the careful anatomizing of existing practices of civility.

There is a counterpart to this location of civility and politics in Collingwood. To see it more clearly, additional concepts – 'civilization' (Collingwood) and *civitas* (Oakeshott) – need to be introduced and this requires two further distinctions, to be explored in two separate sections: between politics and policy and between laws and manners. In Oakeshott, the former corresponds to the distinction between two modes of association, the latter is a distinction within civil association. Collingwood attempts to tackle both at once. In the end, however, the politics/policy distinction resurfaces in the form of the difference between civilization and the state.

Laws and manners

The state, according to Collingwood, is capable of both creating and abating various social nightmares, including the favourite one of the twentieth century: our 'powerlessness in the giant grip of economic and social and political structures', when these 'creatures formed by the art

of man, "for whose protection and defence" they were intended', become 'the chief authors of the evils for whose ending we have made them'. Then hope turns to despair. Yet, if 'the hope went, the despair would go too. If we believed Marx's monstrous lie that all States have always been organs for the oppression of one class by another, there would be nothing to make all this fuss about' (12.9–12.95).

Collingwood's own way of re-asserting the importance of both the state and politics for human freedom locates politics within the state while presenting the state itself as the site of civilization domestically and the vehicle of it internationally. The state first appears as the mill-race indeed, a human invention meant to accumulate power and to put it into the service of civility. However, while discussing civilization, Collingwood reverses the flow of analysis, beginning this time not with the purposive individual action but with the practice of civility. This introduces a tension into the overall argument so that it ends up telling two conflicting stories at once.

The mill-race

Collingwood's idea of society is stated in opposition to that of class (19.1–19.7). The basic distinction is that classes are organized in terms of resemblance, societies in terms of participation. To be able to make a classification, one has to participate in a society within which public agreement as to what resembles what already exists. This agreement constitutes a society. Insofar as human societies are constituted by social consciousness, they can be constituted only by agents who have and can share it, that is, by humans who are free and capable of recognizing the freedom of others. The word 'society' already contains a reference to free will, often however obscured once the Roman conception of *societas* is 'swallowed … [as it is] found in text-books' without looking at the facts of modernity (20.82). The Romans were interested in partnerships as long as these involved economic interests, but with some modifications their theory holds good without any reference to transactional considerations. The most important of these modifications concerns the criteria of membership, which were defined by Romans in terms of sex, age and citizenship. These were context-specific safeguards 'of the idea that no one could legally be a party to a contract unless he was capable of making up his mind for himself and explaining it, if need be, in court', that is, the idea 'that a contract must be a *joint activity of free agents*; their free participation in a joint enterprise' (19.57). Collingwood repeatedly stresses that 'enterprise' here is as far removed from economics as a joint decision to 'go for this walk' or to 'sail this boat' (20.91). But the stress

on *this*, as in 'this society', results in a tension in his theory of 'external politics'.

Politics in Collingwood belongs to the body politic, which is always and irredeemably a mixture of a non-social community and society proper: 'The world of politics is a dialectical world in which non-social communities (communities of men in what Hobbes called the *state of nature*) turn into societies' (24.71). What constitutes a society is an authoritative agreement presented in the contractual idiom of decision-making. Society, as a joint will of its members, is also an enterprise, but of a special kind, 'intended to "travel hopefully" but not "to arrive": no time of termination being either stated or implied' (21.92).

Within a body politic, authority belongs exclusively to its social part and here it is clearly separated from force. Every body politic, however, includes non-social element, those incapable of ruling themselves and therefore unfit to enter a society. Hence the distinction between the rulers and the ruled: the rulers constitute a society and rule the rest of the body politic by force (the first law of politics). Politics is the process of upbringing the ruled so that they might become the rulers (the second law of politics). This process can be maintained only in a manner historically established and accepted within a given body politic (the third law of politics). All three laws operate concurrently, but logically the process is firmly grounded in the activity of self-ruling (25.7–25.9).

There are three possible reasons for the outbreak of war: 'because men charged with the conduct of external politics are confronted by a problem they cannot solve'; 'because the internal condition of the body politic is unsound'; and 'because the rulers [of a given body politic] are at loggerheads' (30.31; 30.34; 30.37; emphasis deleted). The problem men charged with the conduct of external politics cannot solve is systemic: there are ineliminable differences between the bodies politic (29.55). But differences as such need not result in war. War is a failure to obey international law, which Collingwood believes can operate without legislators to enact or rulers to enforce it (28.76–28.79). The internal condition of a body politic depends on the operation of law and order within it (30.25). Law and order are bound to break down when 'the rulers are at loggerheads', which is the main cause of war, since this marks a breakdown in the activity of participation in a society and therefore a breakdown in the activity of self-ruling.

Thus Collingwood's theories of man, society and 'external politics' are all presented in the idiom of conversion, all three are theories of 'human nature', where 'human nature' is human history and as such the history of the self-knowledge of the mind. Yet there is one important difference.

In the 'theory of man', the universalism is triggered by subjectivity and then converted by reason into a web of intersubjective relationships. Now universalism takes two forms. It is either the 'slavishness' of the ruled that infects the rulers, or it is universalism inherent in the idea of society as such. In the theory of man this dualism was not visible since both subjectivity and reason were assumed to be universal in character, common to all men as men. In external politics, a different kind of *persona*, a citizen, enters the scene and particularity takes a different form:

> The idea of a *particular society* is the idea of a society distinguished from other societies not by having different members but by having a different aim. The idea of a *universal society* is the idea of a society having no special aim which might distinguish it from any other; the idea of a society whose only aim is to be a society; one, therefore, which has for members all such agents as, being conscious of free will in themselves and each other, are able to be members of any society at all. The idea of a universal society is implied in the idea of a particular society. For the aim of a particular society is always twofold. First, it aims at establishing social relation between agents capable of social action; secondly, it aims at devoting this social activity to a particular enterprise. (21.41–21.43)

One way of imposing the character of an enterprise onto the body politic without resorting to straightforward utilitarianism is by relating society's 'aim' to its territorial boundaries. Thus Collingwood refers to the notion of territorial integrity as a ground for the observance of international law, but also as a ground for the whole process of politics conceptualized as upbringing from within a territorial locality constitutive of the non-social community prior to its participation in the process of conversion into a society: 'there are some things which [a community] must have to do with and cannot neglect, whatever kind of community it happens to be. Thus, any community must have a home or place in which corporately it lives' (20.18). Such grounding, however, would constitute the 'fallacy of swapping horses', an appeal to 'bodies' when wills are at stake. Insofar as the idea of a universal society is implied in the idea of a particular society, the body politic has to develop a mode of 'contentment' with its territorial condition. This cannot be grounded in law, which requires rulers to give it, unless international law with its requirement of the formal equality of states is different in kind. In practice, this difference is not likely to be in international law's favour. Subsequently, the 'aim' of a particular society will acquire a familiar form

of the balance of power, at best for the sake of self-preservation. Society's 'aim', stated negatively, is the preservation of its 'way of life' within contingently acquired territorial borders.

The only kind of positive 'external politics', then, would be that of 'true imperialism: to bring light to the darker places of the earth' (EPP 205). As Collingwood argued shortly after the end of the First World War, such an imperialism cannot take place between already established states but has to become their mutual civilizing undertaking: 'mutual service and devotion, abnegation of self, of class, of race, nation, and language in the service of civilization and of the world' (206). However, the value of a particular way of life, that is, the value of any particular form of civilization, itself requires justification before it can be either preserved or expanded globally, and 20 years later, already after the outbreak of the Second World War, Collingwood clearly had second thoughts and outlined an idea of civilization in which appeal to man's natural environment takes an altogether different form. Now it is not a condition from which man liberates himself by acquiring social consciousness, but the one to which he returns in an attempt to recover his civility.

The dry wall

This transition is made through the outline of 'classical politics'. Classical politics was understood in early-modern Europe by analogy with classical physics. The latter became possible once modern Europeans understood the necessity of limiting their theoretical objectives, decided that the body of science consisted of logical abstractions and empirical facts, and recognized mathematics as providing the armature of abstractions, thus limiting their inquiries to empirical facts which admitted of mathematical treatment (NL 31.1–31.39). Similarly, 'classical politicians' understood law as providing abstractions for their science, and limited the scope of empirical observation to facts which admitted of regularian treatment, that is, to the social end of political life. The rest became 'the state of nature' described only insofar as it was needed for an adequate account of society. But regularian thinking begins with setting a rule for oneself. So classical politics describes a process 'whereby a centre already infected with freedom, existing in an uninfected environment consisting of human beings in the "state of nature", gradually infects the environment and brings it into a condition of homogeneity with itself: brings it out of the "state of nature" into the "condition of civil society" ' (NL 32.33).

The state of nature is not the state of war; it is an abstraction needed to indicate the direction of the expansion of civility. War is an activity

marking the breakdown in this expansion: 'the state of nature catabolically re-establishing itself on the ruins of a civil society' (NL 32.69). Civil society is an abstraction of the same kind; both are abstractions from change. Politics, in turn, is the activity of controlling change. Insofar as classical politicians believed change to be unidirectional they did not need to understand both ends. Whether they held such beliefs is a historical question. What matters is that 'we of the twentieth century' do not. But giving up on the idea of progress does not entail giving up on reason. On the contrary, it is here that the difference between the methods of natural and social sciences acquires practical relevance, especially so once it became clear that 'for sheer ineptitude the Versailles treaty surpassed previous treaties as much as for sheer technical excellence the equipment of twentieth-century armies surpassed those of previous armies' and 'the reign of natural science' thus threatened to convert 'Europe into a wilderness of Yahoos' (A 91). Theory should be grounded in a historical understanding of politics, in which case it matters 'which end of the process is the right end and which the wrong; so that, granted we need not hope ever to reach the one or fear ever to reach the other, we can tell which is being brought nearer by a certain change' (NL 30.79).

At the same time, modern science did not abrogate the whole ancient idea of the search for essences but only modified it: 'it is no longer held that the properties of a given thing can be exhaustively deduced from one single essence, but there is still what may be called a "relative essence", an "essence from our point of view", where "we" are the persons engaged in a certain kind of … inquiry' (36.21). This is Collingwood's outline of the transition from the tradition of Nature and Reason, through that of Artifice and Will, to the tradition of Rational Will. This way history and difference enter the picture to be treated under the heading of 'civilization'.

Collingwood identifies three meanings of 'civilization': the ideal condition of civility, the process of approximation to this ideal and a particular, locally arrived at, stage in this process. Of these, he is focusing on civilization as the process. It is something which an association undergoes.[2] For its own members, an association is a 'we' to which there is always a 'not-we'. But there are two kinds of a 'not-we'. The first is an absolute 'not-we', 'not a self at all but a piece of unconscious matter'. The second a relative 'not-we', 'a self in its own right, an "I" to itself, but an "I" other than myself' (35.26), that is, what was presented as the not-self in the 'theory of man'. Thus through the process of civilization, an association sorts out relations between its own members, the relation

between any of its own members and the world of nature, and relations between any of its members and those of any other association. 'In relation to members of the same [association], civilization means *coming to obey rules of civil intercourse*. In relation to the natural world civilization means *exploitation*' (35.36).

In relation to the members of other associations it all comes down to the question: 'Are foreigners human?' (35.61). 'Contentment' does not work in relations between associations, for strangers are denied the recognition of their humanity. But if this is the human condition, humans have to take a closer look at how they treat their natural environment.

What Collingwood is looking for now is a kind of natural science 'more akin to folklore than to mathematics, riddled with superstition, and from the point of view of a twentieth-century "scientist" lamentably unscientific' (36.31). What he is concerned with, is how human relation to the world of nature shapes relations within an association and also relations with otherness as such. The crucial distinction is that between improving and conserving. Improvement has no meaning if it is justified by appeals to the satisfaction of 'needs' because 'needs' only have meaning in relation to the current state of civilization (35.58). Conserving is all about the current state of civilization maintained through transition, but of a certain kind: 'Consider knots. The life of every sailor, the catch of every fisherman, and a thousand of other things of varying importance, depend on knowing that a knot will not come untied until you set out to untie it, and will quickly come untied when you do' (36.35). There are many different types of knots but only a small number of these is in constant use. Whoever invented them, was 'a man in whose presence a fellow-inventor consisting of Archimedes and Gutenberg and George Stephenson and Edison, rolled into one, would hide his diminished head' (36.41):

> Who invented the bow-line? *Ignoramus, ignorabimus*. How did he invent it? *Ignoramus, ignorabimus*. I cannot conceive how anybody ever did anything so brilliant. ... But how, once invented, was it transmitted? In general terms I know the answer. The conditions for such an event are that there should be a community in which inventions are not hoarded, but taught; that there should be men who know them and are willing to teach them, and men who do not know them and are willing to learn them. (36.59)

Such an association is possible only in the spirit of agreement now understood not as individual decision but as belonging to the custom

that 'everybody who does not know a thing that may be useful for the betterment of living shall go frankly to one who knows it, and listen while he explains it or watch while he shows it, confident by custom of a civil answer to a civil question' (36.46). And if such conception of science, and a world it implies, is only an ideal, a golden age, then nothing can help the world as we know it.

So, if 'contentment' with the presence of strangers is an impossibility, toleration can be introduced by issuing a warning against the ruin wrought by the mindless exploitation of man's environment in general. Now analysis begins with practice, the practice of civility which, without losing its character as an ideal, is located not in the future but within current experience. Human cooperation is supported by reason but it does not originate in it (36.74). The origins of authority are now in the custom of maintaining law and order, while law, as an experience of converting non-agreements into agreements, is not given by the rulers but rooted in the manners of a society which arise historically and have nothing to do with vulgarly understood 'politeness' but rather originates in the centralization of violence and its conversion into law (40.73–40.75).

Now difference can be accounted for by reference to the historically acquired manners rather than deliberately subscribed to 'aims' of particular societies. Civility, as a given state in the process of civilization, is sustained by the confidence in the custom of receiving a civil answer to a civil question. This practice is threatened by the 'world of office-drudges and factory-drudges', the world of technological exploitation of nature, 'the world of Fascist or Nazi dreams', the worlds of socialism and state-promoted capitalism, all of which are 'only our present world with bankruptcy brought nearer' by the industrialization of the most basic human relationships, education in particular: 'These are the alternative forms of ruin which by now confront a civilization where men have been fools enough to hand their children over to professional education' (37.56–37.60).

So, if while presenting the state as the mill-race of civilization (and reason as a conqueror of desire) Collingwood described the life of politics as 'the life of political education', now it becomes important to dissociate education, as the root of civility, from the state so as to protect civility from the malaise of technology. Even more important is to identify that region of experience from which the practice of civility stems:

> there is a vast region of experience in which the irresponsible attitude of doing things for fun resists all the onslaughts of professionalism. For every man who indulges himself in games and sports and pastimes,

> this region includes all those things. For almost every human being it includes eating and sleeping and making love. ('Philosophers' have traditionally belittled these things. More fools they. Look closely, and you will see in them the sheet-anchor of civilization.) This region includes almost all that is enjoyable in life, and almost all that people do well for the excellent reason that they have no motive to shirk it. (37.83–37.86)

This is more than just a retraction of Collingwood's own earlier views on work and play. It is also another departure from the Hegelian philosophy of history dominated by the presence of the state: 'This is what comes of treating political history by itself as if it were the whole of history. The moral is that political developments should be conceived by the historian as integrated with economic, artistic, religious, and philosophic developments, and that the historian should not be content with anything short of a history of man in his concrete actuality' (IH 122). Political theory and politics are still firmly anchored in the state, but the state itself stops being the vehicle of civilization. Rather, humans learn the practice of civility from within the localities of their landscapes and manners. In so doing they participate in a potentially universal society. This shared participation allows for the classification of human associations in terms of their resemblance and thus for a distinction between the ancient *polis* and the modern state as different forms of human association constituted by a shared context of historical process.

Put differently, humans are making history by inventing and inhabiting institutions appropriate to their historically acquired manners. This process is driven by human consciousness born out of the 'primal' struggle with man's natural environment. Yet, insofar as the (Hegelian) ultimate resolution of this struggle is ruled out (a 'practical' counterpart to the 'theoretical' liquidation of philosophy), the state begins to lose its attractiveness as the site of historical progress. Now man turns, as it were, back to nature and his childish experiences, not so much in search of consolation or protection, but for a lesson in civility which cannot be given by reason alone. This, however, not only weakens Collingwood's initial defence of the state but also makes 'external politics', as an activity of social conversion brought about by the consorted effort of the states, an impossibility.

Policy and politics

Oakeshott's objection to Collingwood's conception of the state is twofold. On the one hand, the ruled/rulers distinction is not primary but originates in the struggles for recognition which precede the emergence of

states: 'It is often suggested that all human association must be supposed to begin in the relationship of a potentate (or a class of potentates) and those over whom they exercise power. … But it is safe to say that, in general, there is little to be said in favour of these speculative suggestions; and as an account of the emergence of modern European states, nothing at all' (VMS 333). States emerged as pieces of 'inhabited territory with a government: land (often ill-defined), people (often miscellaneous) and ruling authority (usually in the course of seeking recognition)' (319). As far as the territorial arrangements are concerned, the 'history of modern Europe is the history of Poland only a little more so' (OHC 186). On the other hand, once the postulates of ruling are considered in the context of *respublica* rather than the modern state, they have nothing to do with the monopoly on violence within a given territory: 'The compulsion exercised in ruling is totally misunderstood if it is thought of as an unpurged residuum of the violence which civil association purports to abate, and in exercising it rulers are not doing what the conditions prescribed in *lex* withhold from the intercourse of *cives*' (142).

Taken together these statements suggest a distinction between two kinds of violence. Civil association abates violence resulting from the pursuit of individual wants and satisfactions. Here rulers are indeed expected to offer assurance that all the transactional engagements of *cives*, including those of rulers themselves, remain subject to the conditions of *lex*, although the authority of *lex* cannot be derived from the desirability of this assurance. As for the violence in the relations of human associations, *respublica* possesses no resources with which to quell it: 'So far from its being the case (as Hegel suggested) that the character of an association in terms of the rule of law is most fully expressed when it is engrossed in the pursuit of policy or when it is at war, these are the occasions when it is least of itself' (OH 178). In situations that cannot be addressed through judicial remedy 'the common concern may become a common purpose and rulers become managers of its pursuit. … *Inter armis silent leges*' (OHC 146–7).

This alone should be enough for excluding international relations from the scope of the theory of civil association, a view almost certainly held by Oakeshott himself. Yet distinction between the actually existing states and the formal conditions of civil association is not as watertight as it may seem. First, *respublica* necessarily includes rules and procedures which establish its territorial sphere of jurisdiction. Second, there is more to the struggles for recognition out of which human associations emerge (equipped with the apparatus of power to police their territorial borders) than merely the pursuit of state-interests, even if, in the

absence of global authority, these interests are all too often pursued with impunity.

Modern governments emerged out of 'inconclusive encounters … in which Christendom was transformed into a still to be imagined and invented modern Europe' (OH 164–5). This transformation is 'civilization', as an adventure of imagining and inventing civil meanings for what is already recognized as 'good conduct' or 'manners'. With civil meanings territorial arrangements are transformed into spheres of jurisdiction, but they do not make civilization any more solid or secure. At bottom, civilization remains a dream: ' "Insofar as the soul is in the body", says Plotinus, "it lies in deep sleep". What a people dreams in this earthly sleep is its civilization. And the substance of this dream is a myth, an imaginative interpretation of human existence, the perception (not the solution) of the mystery of human life' (HCA 159–60). This is how *civitas*, as a particular association of *cives*, 'lies in deep sleep' in the earthly structure of *respublica* unless awakened through the activity of politics.

The mill-race

For Oakeshott, political theorizing begins with the recognition that modern 'government in respect of its pursuits had come to enjoy a lengthened tether and could browse upon pastures hitherto far out of its reach' (HL 11). Consequently, instead of focusing on questions of the constitution and authorization of governments, the most perceptive of the early-modern theorists began to concentrate on the tasks appropriate for the office of government within associations grown 'political' by practising politics as an activity, 'not of governing, but of determining the manner and the matter of government' (8). Modern politics is 'the counterpart of the modern state whose government and public arrangements are recognized to be the product of human choices and therefore alterable at will' (9). As such it did not exist in the Aristotelian vocabulary where 'politics' and 'rule' remained indistinguishable because 'civil' condition was not yet introduced and distinguished from the 'political' one (OHC 167, note 1).

Thus Montesquieu, according to Oakeshott, was interested in 'democracy' or 'aristocracy', not as forms of rule grounded in the particular constitution of the office of government, but as two different modes of governing appropriate for different self-understandings of the governed subjects (HL 29–43). From this distinction follow two of Oakeshott's rare remarks about the relations of states:

> Kant and others conjectured that a Europe composed of states with republican constitutions would be a Europe at peace. This absurdity is

> often excused on the ground that it is a plausible (although naïve) identification of war with so-called dynastic war, but it is in fact the muddle from which Montesquieu did his best to rescue us, the confusion of the constitution of government (republican) with a mode of association (civil relationship). (OHC 273, note 1)

Alternatively, peace was sought in the 'wrong' mode of global association:

> It is perhaps worth notice that notions of 'world peace' and 'world government' which in the eighteenth century were explored in the terms of civil association have in this century become projects of 'world management' concerned with the distribution of substantive goods. The decisive change took place in the interval between the League of Nations and the United Nations. (313, note 1)

This latter confusion represents what Oakeshott described on another occasion as 'the impulse to escape from the predicament by imposing it upon all mankind' (HL 24). The 'predicament' here is a disposition of modern state-conduct towards a transactional association of states in which rules of conduct certainly exist but do not constitute the terms of association. 'Escape' is sought in a cooperative association of states by which their divergent interests are subordinated to a single one. Again, rules are devised and enforced in order to bring about and sustain such a convergence of interests, but the terms of association are still constituted by interests rather than civil rules. Now confusion results not so much because the imposition of a single interest denies individual states the freedom to pursue their own ends, but rather because world government of this kind would achieve world peace by way of denying a particular understanding of civil freedom and a mode of governing appropriate to it. While attempting to overcome the all too obvious entrepreneurial streak in the character of the modern state, this mode of governing denies to individual states what they in fact possess, a disposition towards civil association of their citizens. Judged from the standpoint of civil freedom, a cooperative association of states does not add anything to the transactional one. Both kinds of association belong to a single mode of relationship, enterprise association, in which there is no politics, but 'only Purpose, Plan, Policy and Power' (OH 135).

However, even if the aforementioned confusions are removed, there is still important objection to the idea of world government. It concerns the absence of any interstate system of *lex* in the recognition of the authority of which a global *respublica* could be anchored. Moreover, the

absence of global *lex* prevents individual states themselves from acquiring a less ambiguous character:

> there has been one unavoidable contingent circumstance of modern Europe for which the rule of law cannot itself provide, namely, the care for the interests of a state in relation to other states, the protection of these interests in defensive war or in attempts to recover notional *irredenta*, and the pursuit of larger ambitions to extend its jurisdiction. And this is not on account of the complete absence of rules (although most of so-called international law is composed of instrumental rules for the accommodation of divergent interests), but because 'policy' here, as elsewhere, entails a command over the resources of the members of a state categorially different from that required to maintain the apparatus of the rule of law, and may even entail the complete mobilization of all those resources. This, of course, does not entail the destruction of all law; but it does entail the desuetude for the time being of a state as an association exclusively in terms of the rule of law. (177–8)

However, what Oakeshott lists here under a single heading, 'unavoidable contingent circumstance', involves at least two distinct considerations not easily reducible to each other. Defensive and civil wars, as well as 'the care for the interests of the state' generally, can indeed be presented as turning the state into *universitas*, itself an enterprise association of a cooperative kind domestically and an agency in transactional enterprise association internationally. Ambitions to extend the state's jurisdiction, however, do not necessarily fall into this category and may well spring from that moving up of the scale of authorizations which Oakeshott presents as a corollary to the validation of the authority of *respublica*.

The attribution of authority is 'not a matter of choice but of subjecting what purports to be authoritative to a certain test and giving reasons for a conclusion' (OHC 154). Because of the habit of the identification of rules with 'rightness' and laws with justice (*lex* with *jus*), there were attempts at testing the authority of *respublica* by tackling two problems at once: validating the authority of *lex* and ascertaining its *jus*. *Respublica* was to be shaped by *lex* authority of which lay in *jus* conceived either in terms of some 'higher' law or some readily available and demonstrable principles such as absolute 'values', inalienable 'rights' or unconditional 'liberties' (OH 168–70). Of these, only the 'higher law' deserves consideration, since '*respublica* itself provides reasons which, because it is composed of rules, must themselves be rules' (OHC 154).

Given that any '*lex* must identify its own jurisdiction because it relates those who are not, as such, otherwise related', every state, even when understood as *societas*, a civil association surrounded by other such associations, must have among its laws, in terms of which its own citizens are related as *cives*, specific rules identifying the state itself (129–30). However, if membership or the territorial sphere of jurisdiction is included into the conditions of *lex* as a self-sustained system not tinged by any particular interests or 'policies', then, considered formally, such system does require, as Collingwood suggested, an association which is universal.

This is acknowledged by Oakeshott not only in his analysis of good conduct, as moral conduct *inter homines*, where the adventures of self-enactment and self-disclosure invite the image of the divine law-giver, but also in that of just or civil conduct, as conduct *inter cives*, where Hobbesian understanding of *jus*, according to which authentic *lex* cannot be *injus*, is presented as consisting exclusively in 'faithfulness to the formal principles inherent in the character of *lex*: non-instrumentality, indifference to persons and interests, the exclusion of *prive-lege* and outlawry, and so on' (OH 173). However, just as in good conduct, where religion offers a reconciliation to nothingness, as a return to the practices of self-disclosure rather than any unconditional escape from them, so in civil conduct faithfulness to the formal principles inherent in the character of *lex* is not enough. It requires an addition: 'the negative and limited consideration that the prescriptions of the law should not conflict with a prevailing educated moral sensibility' within *societas*, so that justice of the non-instrumental conditions imposed upon moral conduct by law, thus turning it into civil conduct, should be recognized 'as a combination of their absolute faithfulness to the formal character of law and their moral-legal acceptability, itself a reflection of the moral-legal self-understanding of the associates which (even when it is distinguished from whatever moral idiocies there may be about) cannot be expected to be without ambiguity or internal contradiction – a moral imagination more stable in its style of deliberation than in its conclusions' (174).

Thus believers in Natural Law may have a head-start in establishing a *societas* of their own but not because they know a 'higher law' from which to deduce the authority of their commonwealth. Rather, they have the experience of recognizing any rule, deliberately enacted or not, as a rule, that is, in terms of its authority:

> The members of the Order which constituted the Abbaye de Thélème dispensed with rules and duties to govern their conduct and took as

> their Rule a precept about how they should think when acting: the Augustinian principle of conduct, 'Love and do what you will'. But … this was a sufficient rule, not because 'virtuous' sentiment suffices, nor because the Thélèmites had been miraculously redeemed from inclination to incontinent self-assertion in their adventures in self-disclosure, but because they were well-born, well-bred, and well-educated in a language of moral intercourse. In the absence of rules and duties, wanton conduct was to seek in the Abbaye (and in the lives of those who went thence into the world), not because the Thélèmites were conspicuously indifferent to self-disclosure in action, but because of their exceptional mastery of a vernacular of moral self-disclosure and their unhesitating acknowledgement of its authority. (OHC 78)

Respublica, as the meeting place of *cives* less disciplined than the Thélèmites and more diverse in their choices as to how they should think when doing what they ought, holds them together by the power of 'being able to formulate [its rules] clearly and to make them known in utterances which reach and are readily understood by all those concerned' (194). This is possible when the claims of morality and legality, although they never fully coincide, do not diverge from each other at random: 'Law and morals normally have the same centre but not the same circumference' (HL 16). The sphere of jurisdiction of a given *respublica*, as a circumference of its *lex*, depends on the circumference of its manners. The latter are vernacular languages, and that 'there should be many such languages in the world … is intrinsic to their character':

> This unresolved plurality teases the monistic yearnings of the muddled theorist, it vexes a moralist with ecumenical leanings, and it may disconcert an unfortunate who, having 'lost' his morality (as others have been known to 'lose' their faith), must set about constructing one for himself and is looking for uncontaminated 'rational' principles out of which to make it. But it will reassure the modest mortal with a self to disclose and a soul to make who needs a familiar and resourceful moral language (and one for which he may hope to acquire a *Sprachgefühl*) to do it in and who is disinclined to be unnerved because there are other such languages to which he cannot readily relate his own. (OHC 80–1)

All this may sound as a restatement of Collingwood's third law of politics, and yet it does not engender a kind of retreat to the premodern understanding of order which characterizes, at least in part,

Collingwood's discussion of tradition. The difference hinges upon Oakeshott's understanding of history and its relation to practice. The structure of law, taken formally, is intrinsically universal but also abstract and empty. It is substantiated, but also particularized, through manners, the vernacular languages of moral conduct, whose current shape is acquired historically. This kind of historicity, however, is thoroughly practical, resulting from the abridgements made, by way of learning, in response to the main characteristic of the world of practice, its transience. When this pastness of moral conduct is 'civilized' by imposing upon it a civil meaning, it takes the form of the activity of ruling in which, unlike in legislation, *lex* is taken as given, an already passed/past law still awaiting its re-enactment through adjudication which will establish its concrete meaning in a concrete situation. What in a moral language has the meaning of the expectation that its native-speaker is 'disinclined to be unnerved because there are other such languages to which he cannot readily relate his own', in civil conduct takes the form of the sphere of jurisdiction policed by rulers at the territorial borders of a *societas*.

Yet moral languages remain alive as long as those speaking them, while recognizing their own mortality/finiteness, have also 'a soul to make'. The civil counterpart of this moral disposition is politics. In politics, the unavoidable practical pastness of *lex* is transformed into 'historical'. This may sound as a modal confusion. What I want to show now is that it is an illustration of the conversation of mankind as it is *practised* by Oakeshott throughout *On Human Conduct*.

The dry wall

To begin with, *respublica* is a practice, and knowledge of practices (or the postulates of human conduct generally) does not result in the understanding of substantive performances and, at the same time, remains incomplete without such understanding. Since practices are not law-like processes, they are not demonstrated by substantive performances, but shaped by them through contingent relationships. This understanding of substantive performances in terms of contingent relationships is distinguished by Oakeshott from theorizing them in terms of 'human nature' or 'social structures' (91–100). Although these modes of analysis approach action differently, on closer examination, both human nature and structure are meaningful only as practices and therefore neither adds much to the task of understanding a substantive performance in which agent, his understanding of his situation, his action, the response it receives and the practice in subscription to which it is performed

form a relationship which has to be understood. This relationship is 'contingency' and 'the identity it constitutes is an *eventum*' (101).

Contingency in Oakeshott is clearly distinguished from 'chance' and moved closer to the notion of 'cause' so as to re-define the latter. This move is indicated already in *On Human Conduct*, where contingent relationship is presented as requiring, at the very least, 'the absence of interval and therefore the absence of a mediator between occurrences, which is not itself an occurrence', and that 'every antecedent is itself a subsequent and every sequel is an antecedent' (104). Here 'what went before, in respect of its going before, is understood … as an action which calls for a response, which perhaps even knows how it would be responded to but, since there are many possible alternative responses, is necessarily ignorant of the exact response it will receive' (104). This, however, does not warrant arbitrariness, for what is being assembled (understood) in this manner is already recognized (in advance of knowing it) as a concrete individuality and thus requires deepest respect and 'an eye for shades of difference between plausible likeness, an ear for echoes and imagination, not to conjecture what is likely, but to devise, recognize, entertain, and criticize a variety of contingent relationships, each sustained by a reading of the evidence' (106). Such an understanding is 'historical' and in *On History* Oakeshott gives it more exact shape.[3]

As with the recognition of individuality in human conduct, historical events are understood in terms of the interplay of chance and choice. Chance is 'the exemplar of purely external, insignificant relationship' (OH 101), a relationship the historian chooses to consider as either incomprehensible or insignificant, since everything in experience may be related to everything else, but not everything can be established or assigned equal value. This in itself does not render historical understanding impossible but rather makes it conditional, limiting the historian's ambitions and subordinating chance to his choices. As in Collingwood, the historian chooses to investigate those situations that strike him, in his present, as making a difference. Unlike Collingwood, Oakeshott refuses to limit the historian's understanding of the antecedents to their purposeful contribution to the emergence of a subsequent. Rather, an antecedent makes that difference which shapes the character of a subsequent as being itself a difference which attracts historian's attention in the first place. A historical event has neither necessary nor essential character but is 'a conflation of accessories which … are the difference they made in a convergence of differences which compose a circumstantial historical identity'. Historical inquiry is neither an explanatory nor a metaphysical exercise, nor is it an attempt to solve a problem,

but 'an engagement to infer, to understand discursively and to imagine the character of the historical event' (103).

The whole point of Oakeshott's critique of historical research is that historical events, understood as assignable individual performances or as structures, are taken as given: a known destination T_2 located in the past to which the historian has to arrive from some yet more distant point T_1. When such understanding of history is further confounded by the suggestion that the character of T_2 is interesting merely insofar as it contributes to the understanding of some present condition T_3, history is conflated with practice: 'Once it was religion which stood in the way of the appearance of the "historical" past; now it is politics; but always it is this practical disposition' (R 182).[4]

Assembling a historical event is never a simple reconstruction of a given fact, even if this fact is understood as a practice (paradigm or structure). It is the elucidation of the 'conditions of human circumstance come upon from behind and understood in terms of their emergence'; its outcome is 'a past of which there can be no record and one necessarily unknown in default of such an inquiry' (OH 65–9). This involves taking a number of related individual occurrences out of some context which up till now endowed them with conditional intelligibility and composing out of them an event which is not yet given. By offering a new context (situation) for the thus re-assembled occurrences, this event constitutes the unintended by-product of the 'transactional engagements which, because they are not assignable performances, cannot be understood in terms of "personalities" but which may be understood in terms of their relation to antecedent by-products of human engagements' (71).

In the language of *On Human Conduct*, 'practices' are such unintended by-products of the transactional engagements of *homines*. Substantive performances are not simply individual actions, but actions recognized as constituted by the relationship of 'touching' which, in turn, shapes the practice in subscription to which these actions are performed. Thus, 'a sequence of contingently related occurrences is not a process in which there is room for manœuvre; it is wholly composed of manœuvrings in touch with one another', and 'understanding in terms of contingent relations is contextual: what has to be understood and the terms in which it is understood are not two different kinds of identities (like a "law" and examples of its operation), they are individual occurrences made to elucidate one another in an investigation of their evidential relationships' (OHC 105).

How does this understanding of historical inquiry relate to politics? Political deliberation is concerned not with individual transactional

performances but with one particular by-product of them, authoritative rules and procedures that may come to compose a *respublica*-'not yet' through an act of legislation. Although this occurrence is located in the future, at the very moment of its realization it should be already suited for the activity of ruling: 'a civil prescription is undesirable if it be incapable of enforcement' (178); and rulers attend to *lex* (if not to *respublica* as a whole in which there are always procedures for preventing anticipated transgressions) as a past law. Political deliberation approaches its subject 'from behind' and understands it in terms of the possibility of change. Its conclusion, although deliberation itself necessarily springs from some specific grievance or enthusiasm, can only take the form of an authoritative rule, for the 'fit' of whatever is proposed should be 'among the desirabilities – lest one good rule should destroy the coherence of the practice' (180).

'Change' and 'coherence' are the categories of both historical and practical understanding. As for the 'past' of political deliberation, it is undeniably practical, and this practical disposition in politics is strengthened further once an already deliberated proposal re-enters the scene in the activity of persuasion – an explicitly transactional engagement in which an agent, having already reached his conclusions about the best, or the most persuasive, reasons behind a political prescription, tries to convince others, not of the cogency of his own reasons, nor even of the merits of his proposal, but that they should respond to his utterance in the way imagined and wished-for by him: 'And a speaker who is not ready to forgo agreement with the reasoning which has convinced him of the merits of this action proposed, one who is unaware of the difference between the logic of deliberating and the logic of persuading, will never persuade, or will do so only by chance' (49).

As in the interplay of self-disclosure and self-enactment, in politics, agreement is expected on the level of action (persuasion) and not reflection (deliberation). Moreover, what is sought in persuasion 'is not a release from the considerabilities of conduct into the realm of theoretical understanding with its inevitable threat to the survival of the *explicandum*, nor an extended elucidation of performance in which it becomes interestingly but unnecessarily transparent … , but merely a settlement of the doubts which made difficult a response to the action concerned' (50). All in all, politics belong to the realm of doing, while historical understanding is located on the level of theoretical understanding. For this reason alone the former cannot be approximated to the latter.

However, once an agreement among *cives* is not only reached but results in an act of legislation, this outcome is a substantive performance.

What is performed here is not *respublica*, for practices cannot be performed. This particular performance can no longer be theorized as an action of an assignable person (although in practice this is what it is), for such theorizing will reduce it to decision, as an individual choice to do this rather than that, while telling nothing about its civil meaning. The latter can only be grasped if the outcome is understood as *eventum*, in terms of its coming into being; that is, understood 'historically', as 'a convergence of occurrences' in touch with each other: 'not a merely recorded occurrence, not itself an assignable action or an assignable response to an action, but the contingent outcome of the choices and encounters of assignable agents and understood as this outcome' (OH 107).

In other words, what is performed in politics is *civitas*, as *an* association of *cives*. Rather than being a political mill-race which ensures the purposeful concentration of the resources of civility, *civitas* is theorized as being intermittently assembled out of the milling about of human conduct in a manner appropriate for historical inquiry:

> When a historian assembles a passage of antecedent events to compose a subsequent he builds what in countryside is called a 'dry wall': stones (that is, the antecedent events) which compose the wall (that is, the subsequent) are joined and held together, not by mortar, but in terms of their shapes. And the wall, here, has no premeditated design; it is what its components, in touching, constitute'. (102)

Thus, far from being the 'art of the possible', Oakeshottian politics, theoretically understood, shares its conclusion with historical inquiry: 'As nothing here is necessary, so also nothing is impossible' (104). As for the level of doing, it is not altogether impossible to imagine an agent who, while deliberating a political prescription, understands the territorial entity he has come to inhabit as a building 'constructed by many hands and over a long period of time', so that for him: 'Its architecture represented many different styles, and so far conflicted with the known rules of construction that it was a matter of wonder that it remained standing' (V 158). And wonder, even when incited by goings-on, such as buildings, normally considered 'from the point of view of their durability and the manner in which they satisfy a practical need' (R 538), may lure an attentive observer 'into looking or listening', and then 'the mood of contemplation may supervene' and the character of the building 'as a poetic image may, suddenly or gradually, come to impose itself upon us' (539).

This is not meant to aestheticize politics, only to indicate that the most rigid of structures may change their identity in conduct, and every such change requires a corresponding change in the idiom of inquiry.

Wonder does not necessarily lead to poetry, but it does always point towards that 'shadow line' which separates one mode of experience from another. Confronted with wonder, an agent still has to make a choice of this performance rather than that, but it is no longer a practical choice of this or that action. What an agent chooses here is the idiom of inquiry.

To be sure, he cannot be expected to pursue the intimations of each of these idioms thoroughly so as to exchange completely his concerns of an agent for those of the theorist. Nevertheless, a not-so-simple appreciation of the 'etymological decencies and syntactical proprieties' of a vernacular language of civil intercourse would be enough for the recognition of *respublica* as a 'historic practice'; and then, intermittently, the structure of *respublica* may dissolve in political imagination into an instance of a *civitas*.[5] Here territorial boundaries will not disappear, but their meaning will change. Understood as a substantive performance, *civitas* may be viewed as being in touch with other performances of this kind, so that this 'touching' itself will invite further understanding. And this 'touching', of course, is 'international relations', while such understanding of this subject may be said to have a tradition of its own.

Civilization and tradition

The point of this chapter has been, in part, negative: to show that the modern European state cannot serve as a model for a global order compatible with the understanding of human freedom that is central to Oakeshott's idea of civil association or Collingwood's conception of the state of civility. Nor can such order be found in the relations between actually existing states. Rather, the global association of states may be understood as at once composed of *universitates* and *societates*.

As far as relations between states as *universitates* are concerned, these are driven by 'policy', that is, 'designs to promote and to seek substantive conditions of things recognized as the satisfaction of an *interest* or held to be the common *interest* of the associates' (OH 176). Whether such interest is identified with the establishment of perpetual peace or with 'the prosperity of the associates or the maximization of the pleasurable sensations of the associates and their pet animals' (146), makes little difference for the terms of association. The nobleness or the scale of ambition involved in any such project is irrelevant inasmuch as the imagined and wished-for outcome it postulates is understood merely as a want to be satisfied. World politics may be possible, if at all, only in the relations between states as *societates*.

It is quite possible that *cives* may come to believe that the conduct of neighbouring, or remote, associations makes it desirable to introduce

certain changes into the conditions of their own *societas*. In itself, however, the deliberation of such changes will not be different from the activity of politics. To be a distinct human activity, world politics has to be addressed to the overall conditions of a global order composed entirely of civil rules and procedures and understood exclusively in terms of its civil authority.

The classical approach claims that some such order exists in the form of international society distinct both from the merely transactional association of states, international system, and the global order of human beings, world society. One of the early formulations of this threefold distinction identified international society with 'civilization', understood along the lines of Collingwood's account of the latter – not as an original condition of mankind, nor as a given entity, but as a process. As Herbert Butterfield put it, 'in the long run many people, who only see the surface of things, come to forget that there ever had been the sword behind the velvet – and imagine that the world had been naturally civilized all the time, civilized in its original constitution'; but to give civilization its due one has to think of it as a procedure by which 'the régime of power politics' comes 'to be chastened and qualified'.[6]

It may seem that in this formulation the connection between international system ('the sword') and international society ('the velvet') is stressed, while the possibility of world society (the world's 'original constitution') is flatly denied. On closer reading, however, this is not the case:

> The real clue to the whole civilizing process lies in the development of an international order and the consequent release of certain 'imponderables' which seem to operate on human affairs by a species of chemistry. And it is important that we should understand this phenomenon; for it is not any international paper constitution, nor is it any particular disposition of forces in the world, but it is just these imponderable factors, which constitute the operative virtue of the supra-national system. Since it is precisely these 'imponderables' which have been destroyed in our time as the result of two world wars, we have lost the most essential aspect of an international order – the one thing that cannot be recovered by the mere drafting of a paper code.[7]

What is interesting in this passage is that the 'imponderables' of the supra-national system are presented as being at once a by-product of civilization, something which is released rather than institutionalized through order-building, and a constitutive element of a system more comprehensive than the order of states itself.[8] Oakeshottian 'civilization',

as an instance of *civitas* into which *respublica* is 'carefully anatomized' through the activity of politics so as to arrange out of such instances a *respublica* not-yet-known, meets this requirement. It does so because in civil conduct individual wants are first 'civilized' by making their satisfaction (not the wants themselves) subject of the considerations of *lex* and then released in the form of desire of another order. In politics proper, the 'effect' (desirability of a *respublica* to be) outgrows its 'cause' (desirability of a practical situation to be) by being moved to another modal platform of understanding (history). Similarly, persuasion is 'an inherently corrupting engagement' (OHC 49; here Oakeshott seems to agree with Plato) when it is a practical transaction, but as an act of speech it may also belong to that kind of performance in which we 'speak an heroic language of our own invention, not merely because we are incompetent in our handling of symbols, but because we are moved not by the desire to communicate but by the delight of utterance' (R 539).

Here an agent may cross a 'shadow line' indeed, separating him from the 'unprofessional guardians' of the vernacular language of civil intercourse, but will find himself not in a 'solid world of things', but in that of individual occurrences recognized as such.[9] In conduct, this points towards a considerability to be taken into account in political deliberation: 'while there can be no action specified in terms of place (e.g. "at home"), or circumstance, or consequence, or relationship (e.g. that of a man to his dog or to inanimate things), in principle exempt from civil conditions, civil intercourse recognizes a circumstantial privacy, *beyond the formal autonomy assured to* cives *in civil prescriptions being laws* and not surrogate choices of actions, which merits consideration' (OHC 179; emphasis added). The only meaning that 'privacy' can have here, given Oakeshott's analysis of the interplay of self-disclosure and self-enactment, is that the 'public' of good conduct does not coincide with the 'public' of civil conduct. In civil conduct there is no place for excuse, for example, insofar as the attribution of guilt is monopolized by *lex*.[10] Politics, in this sense, is an activity through which the distinction between laws and manners is maintained in conduct.

In understanding, making this distinction requires not only the recognition of the difference between the formal and the historically acquired characteristics of rules (this can be found in both Collingwood and Oakeshott), but also one further distinction: between historical and practical past (this Collingwood does not make). While the pastness of moral practices cannot be denied, it can be attended to differently. If the pastness of a system of *lex* is understood in the idiom of practice, then the presence of other such systems can only call for 'contentment'

(Collingwood) or 'discipline' (Oakeshott), both of which should be exercised by rulers as their practical choice to do this rather than that (decision). Understood 'historically', it calls for the intermittent suspension of ruling, as it were, so that, in the moment of politics, the practice of civility (*respublica*) could be transformed in political imagination into a substantive performance (*civitas*).

The problem with this dualistic (historical and practical) character of practices is that the choice of the idiom of inquiry itself cannot be accounted for by reason (otherwise, this choice would be subject to one of the idioms in question). Oakeshottian metaphor of the conversation of mankind expresses, first and foremost, this impossibility. Individual 'voices' cannot possibly argue not because they are exceptionally 'polite', but because there are no grounds for a rational argument. It is on the level of doing, and only if the limitations of practice are somehow accepted without any solid rational grounding, that 'conversation' correlates to 'good manners'.

This problem of the limitations of reason in generating (as opposed to guarding) 'contentment' is clearly recognized by Collingwood in *The New Leviathan*. For Oakeshott, it is the *Leviathan* of Hobbes that calls for direct engagement with it. To this engagement I shall turn later, after showing how this very problem appears in contemporary International Relations precisely once the limitations of inter*national* order are considered.

Every order among bounded human associations has as its condition of possibility an 'operative virtue' sometimes presented as world society. This is hardly the most appropriate name, not least because it attempts to impose a civil meaning ('society') onto that which is in fact 'released' through the procedure of civilization. I propose to call it 'tradition'. To paraphrase Oakeshott, who once referred to our politics as distorted by the eristic tones of the voice of science in conference with a certain modulation of the voice of practice, tradition is the conversation of history and practice that makes a different mode of politics possible. As such, it corresponds to that 'spirit of agreement' which, according to Collingwood, cannot originate in reason but necessarily precedes all classification and therefore, in the case of global order, the attribution of agency to this or that class of actors, be they states or any other institutions.

6
Tradition

The task now is to relate Oakeshott's analysis of human conduct to that of international society so as to arrive at an idea of world politics. The classical approach, while enlisting the support of Oakeshott for the defence of its version of international society against the international system of rationalism, also distances itself from the 'critical' investigations of world society. In so doing, it appeals to Oakeshott's rejection of cosmopolitanism. However, cosmopolitan options are not exhausted by the idea of a global state. An idea of tradition compatible with Oakeshott's analysis may be, first, much more 'critical' than the classics would have it, and second, may be interpreted as a kind of world society.

One way of advancing such an interpretation is to anatomize the idea of civilization as it exists in contemporary International Relations so as to re-arrange its various authenticated features into an idea of world order more hospitable towards Oakeshottian poetry. These features I shall describe as international system, international society and world society. Each requires authentication, since these components will be borrowed from different theoretical discourses. Thus international system will be presented in its rationalist version, international society as it is understood by the classical approach, and different accounts of world society will be taken from classical and critical political theories.

At least three conceptions of civilization can be identified in contemporary International Relations. The first announces itself in the form of the 'clash of civilizations'. Although staged in the post-Cold War world, it is rooted in the discontents of the late 1960s, when it was argued that, whereas modernity may be associated with stability, modernization is more likely to produce revolutionary upheavals. Now Westernization is presented as having a similar effect on non-Western 'civilizations'. The problem here lies with the understanding of what civilizations are.

These are portrayed as rigidly bounded territorial entities organized around certain given, mostly religious, ideas. How exactly such entities may be understood as acting or clashing remains, for the most part, unclear. Civilizations, supposedly, are powered by their core-states, if they have one, and the whole construction, as far as the attribution of agency is concerned, tends to fall back on the meaner and leaner neorealist version of international system in which states, perhaps more easily allied along 'civilizational' lines, bargain with each other for their individual survival as minimum and world-domination as maximum.[1]

Another 'civilizational' story is told within the English school under a less pessimistic heading of the 'evolution of international society'. Here the master-image is that of the three concentric circles, so that international society is located in-between international system and world society. 'Evolution' may be understood in temporal terms, so that the world order, taken as a whole, is seen as evolving from the condition of international system into that of international society and then world society. This image is opposed to the 'Augustinian' version of realism which does not question the existence of international society but understands it as a way of (eternal) coping with the consequences of man's fall from the original condition of world society into that of international system. Alternatively, 'evolution' may be understood in spatial terms, so that international society first develops into a localized nucleus of world society and then expands to the rest of the world.[2]

The third image originates in one of the critical approaches. Here civilization is understood as a dynamic search for a fit between material conditions of existence and intersubjective meanings characterized by three basic dimensions: the notions of time and space, the tension between individual and community, and a shared set of ideas about the relationship of humanity to nature and the cosmos.[3] Although civilizations vary, depending on how they contingently resolve these tensions, each tends to acquire an institutional structure some of which are uniformly imposed by the most powerful onto the rest. There is also a possibility, in fact, a need for a supra-intersubjectivity to resist the imposed homogeneity of the global structures of dominance. This may take shape around the 'organic intellectuals' who, at the points of intersection of the various realms of meaning and dominance would 'eschew determinism, and offer alternative conceptualizations of how things might be done'.[4]

Of these three approaches, only the second, in its 'pluralist' or 'classical' version, remains unequivocally committed to the state as the major actor in international relations. It is therefore engaged in a battle on two

fronts, defending its conception of international society against both international system and world society. Consequently, the 'classics' do provide an interesting analysis of international *lex*, but fail to extend it towards an understanding of world politics. Thus I shall first examine the insights and the limitations of the classical approach. The former consist in the valuable distinction it makes between policy and politics. The latter results from its failure to grasp the distinction between laws and manners. I then turn to the 'critical' way of drawing these distinctions. Finally, I shall assemble an alternative image of world order and locate 'tradition' and world politics within it.

World order

Before considering the classical approach and its version of international society, a few words have to be said about the international system of neorealism, mostly regarding the latter's claim to provide a theory of international *politics*. The word 'politics' in the title of Kenneth Waltz's book has two interrelated meanings. First, 'politics' is defined by reference to what it is not, 'relations', which in turn may mean two different things: 'the interactions of units and the positions they occupy vis-à-vis each other'.[5] Since Waltz is interested in presenting a systemic theory, he insists on abstracting from the interactions of units and concentrates on a purely positional image of international system. Second, this system is 'political' because the governing principle of its structure is not that of wealth or beauty, for example, but 'anarchy', as opposed to the 'hierarchy' of domestic political orders.

Advocates of the Waltzian version of neorealism stress the positional character of his system, insisting that the behaviour of its units, namely, their preference for relative over absolute gains and thus the impossibility of cooperation between such units, is caused exclusively by the anarchical structure of the international system.[6] Critics maintain that Waltz's theory contains the individualist assumption concerning the units' propensity to maximize their power.[7] Another line of criticism concedes to Waltz the holistic account of behaviour but claims that his understanding of units' identity remains individualistic, chiefly because of the absence of rules in his conception of the system.[8]

Without entering into all the intricacies of these longstanding debates, suffice it to say that Waltzian states may be as positional or holistic as one chooses, and the system as abundant with rules as that of the most elaborate game. What matters is that these rules are exclusively prudential and the system is exclusively transactional. While such rules are designed

to promote certain purposes, the authority of these rules does not constitute the terms of association. As Oakeshott puts it, describing the rules governing the operation of a fire station, 'no fire would ever be prevented or put out if the associates recognized themselves to be related solely in terms of these rules, or if they did nothing but observe them' (OHC 117).

Put differently, whatever the merits or faults of Waltzian theory as a theory of the enterprise association of states, this is what this theory is, and there is no place for politics in enterprise association invariably governed through managerial decisions. On the definition of politics presented so far, Waltzian theory is a misnomer, it is a 'theory of international management'. As such, it can only offer a partial account of world order and international system, as one ideal characterization of such order. It has to be supplemented, in the first instance, with another one, in which the authority of the procedural rules of 'good international conduct' will constitute the terms of association. This is what Terry Nardin and Robert Jackson attempt to provide in the form of international society.

Although both Nardin and Jackson draw on Oakeshott's understanding of human conduct, their versions of the classical approach are quite different. First, they understand the state differently. Second, they ground international society differently. Nevertheless, in both accounts, international society is opposed to both international system and world society. This indeed bears some resemblance to Oakeshott's positioning of human conduct in-between two modes of fabrication: extraction of wished-for outcomes by force and the unconditional pursuit of moral excellence. Yet Oakeshott's account is meaningful, first and foremost, in relation to the understanding of individual identity which, by and large, remains under-theorized in both Nardin and Jackson, and in the classical approach more generally. Consequently, the classical understanding of the overall constellation posits a rather limited account of world society, in which Oakeshottian rejection of one particular mode of cosmopolitanism is taken for a denial of any cosmopolitanism whatever.

Policy and politics

Unlike Oakeshott, who introduces the *universitas/societas* distinction so as to problematize the modern European state, Nardin takes the states as he finds them in today's world. Accordingly, that very apparatus of power which prevents the actually existing state from obtaining the unambiguous character of *societas* serves, insofar as it allows for the personification of the state internationally, as the precondition of having what Nardin

describes as 'practical association' of states. This mode of association is opposed by him to 'purposive association' in which states jointly pursue shared ends so that 'an international society can be said to exist only to the extent that there is cooperation in this pursuit'.[9] Nardin rejects this kind of association as non-feasible, non-desirable and at any rate non-existent. States pursue divergent ends, while durable relations between them 'presuppose a framework of common practices and rules capable of providing some unifying bond where shared purposes are lacking. Such practices are embedded in the usages of diplomacy, in customary international law, and in certain moral traditions'.[10]

Contrary to some cursory statements of Oakeshott, Nardin demonstrates that at least some international institutions are not merely instrumental in their character but shape the morally authoritative context for the conduct of states. If one focuses on whatever is 'practical' in international society, one can still meaningfully speak about world governance if not government. International society, construed in 'practical' terms, is the mode of such governance.

The dualistic, instrumental and authoritative, nature of these institutions is, however, undeniable. What, then, accounts for the instrumental, purposive disposition in the relations of states? One possible answer is: both the anarchical nature of international system and the aspiration to transform international society into a mutually advantageous global enterprise of either states or individuals; that is, to put it in Oakeshott's terms, 'the impulse to escape from the predicament by imposing it upon all mankind'. If this 'impulse' alone is considered, then the plurality of states appears as an alternative. If it is argued further that the purposeful disposition thus conceived is undesirable, then this plurality acquires positive value. Such positive value is what Nardin attempts to establish. If, however, it is recognized that the 'purposive' disposition in the life of international society, realized in the form of transactional rather than cooperative association, may well spring from the plurality of states as self-seeking power-bargainers, then upholding the intrinsic value of the pluralist position becomes more problematic.

This is recognized by Jackson who, first, substitutes 'prudential association' for Nardin's 'purposive' (this accommodates Oakeshott's 'transactional' association, distinct from cooperative but still belonging to the 'enterprise' mode of relationships between agents), and second, stresses the dualist character of the state: 'Prudential association between states ordinarily is entangled in procedural association between states: the *Machtstaat* and the *Rechtsstaat* usually exist and operate in tandem and not in isolation'.[11] He then sets for himself the twofold task of defending

the *societas* of states against both the 'solidarists', whom he understands as advocating a global cooperative *universitas* of individuals, and realists, for whom international society exists, at best, as a charitable addition to the international system so that the '*Machtstaat* carries the *Rechtsstaat* on its broad shoulders'.[12] Another important clarification concerns Jackson's insistence that the subject-matter of the 'classical approach' has always been, and ought to be, human conduct rather than the conduct of states. States may be understood as acting only insofar as they are represented by 'statespeople', the occupants of specific offices endowed with authority to enact and interpret the practices of international society.

The authority of these offices is derived from the *Grundnorm* of international society: the principle of non-intervention. Its value is 'negative', it only establishes conditions under which particular states can pursue their preferred forms of the 'good life'. Whether any of these are actually achieved within any particular state is beyond the responsibility and the power of international society. The norm itself is a contingent historic achievement. Its first expression, and also its character as a principle, is to be found in the double-maxim of the Peace of Westphalia, *cujus regio ejus religio* and *rex et imperator in regno suo*: matters of religious faith, and thus the forms of 'good life', were to be decided domestically by statespeople equal in their international status. Thus statespeople became the authors of international law and international society more generally.

Jackson recognizes, in fact, insists, that international society has no territory, government or population of its own, nobody ' "lives" in international society the way millions of people do live in particular countries'.[13] Lurking behind this image, however, is what John Ruggie described as the paradox of absolute individuation: 'Having established territorially fixed state formations, having insisted that these territorial domains were disjoint and mutually exclusive, and having accepted these conditions as the constitutive bases of international society, what means were left to the new territorial rulers for dealing with problems of that society that could not be reduced to territorial solution?' As it happens, the only solution, as expressed in such early Westphalian practices as ambassadorial extraterritoriality, was the gradual 'unbundling' of territoriality, so that over time the 'nonterritorial functional space' became the 'place wherein international society is anchored'.[14]

This is not to say that international society is hopelessly ungrounded, only, to use Oakeshott's phrase, that its anchorage is to be sought in a sea-anchor rather than any fixed foundation. Such grounding is explored

by Nardin in his analysis of the character of international law. The central point of this analysis is that 'the most striking feature of customary international law is that, although its standards are standards of conduct for states and statesmen, the judgements upon which the creation and application of these standards rest are those of a specialized community of international lawyers'. Moreover, 'these same practices figure in the judgements of many others who know little of international law and for whom the rights and wrongs of states and statesmen are a matter of viewing international conduct from the perspective of a tradition … over which lawyers and politicians by no means have a monopoly and which is indeed often opposed to the particular usages of law and government'.[15] While recognizing the importance of these other judgements, Nardin argues that customary international law is a moral practice capable of accommodating the liberties of not just states but also individuals.

The authorship of international law, however, matters. In order to uphold the intrinsic value of the plurality of states as embodied in international law, Nardin needs to resist the critical pull of the pluralism of moral traditions and not just individual viewpoints generated within any single tradition. This he does by noting that international law 'is not only a *kind* of law but a particular *instance* of that kind: the international legal system'.[16] It is the only existing tradition which addresses itself to (and possesses traditional resources for) the issue of inter*national* morality. Thus Nardin finds a point of universality to match the unity of the territorial world subdivided into sovereign units. Unlike Jackson, he associates it not with a principle but with an actually existing tradition. This tradition is obviously tainted with contingency and power. Accordingly: 'If there does exist an international morality transcending the contingent features of particular moral communities or traditions, it is likely to be found in the ongoing conversation or dialogue among them'.[17] But would that be an inter*national* morality, then?

It seems that Nardin's theory is also a misnomer, but in a sense different from that in which Waltz's is. What it actually suggests is a theory of 'law, morality and the relations of humans, as inhabitants of particular traditions, in the world contingently divided into states'; that is, a theory of 'human conduct in a world of states' indeed. The overall construction can be understood as self-contained only insofar as the correspondence between international law and the diversity of moral standpoints belonging to different traditions is somehow related to this contingent division. To use Oakeshott's metaphor, it has to be shown that a world in which not only the circumference but also the centre of the international legal system does not coincide with the multiple

centres of morality can still be understood and inhabited as a single social whole.

Both Jackson and Nardin argue that international society constitutes such a whole which holds the world composed of diverse moral traditions together. Where their accounts differ is in the grounding of the authority of international society. For Nardin, it is anchored in the 'ongoing conversation or dialogue' of diverse moral traditions; for Jackson, in the ground-norm of non-intervention. Yet both distinguish international society not only from international system composed of Waltz's 'like-units', Jackson's *Machtstaaten* or Oakeshott's *universitates* but also from world society. Despite the different grounding of international society, Nardin is likely to agree with Jackson that world society does have a positive historical existence but only as a construction of the society of states. Both understand world society as an institutional expression of the idea of the unity of humankind which spans at least from the time of the Stoics to the modern practice of the protection of human rights.[18] In this manner, especially so in Jackson's construction, an uneasy alliance between international system and international society is forged against world society, or cosmopolitanism, as yet another mode of (institutionalized) universalism.

However, three questions are pertinent here. Whether cosmopolitanism ought to be equated with institutional universalism. Whether in the alliance of international system and international society *Rechtsstaat* becomes the hostage of *Machtstaat*, while 'world policy', as the ongoing struggle over divergent interests, leaves no space for world politics. And what if Nardin's 'ongoing conversation or dialogue' between diverse moral traditions is the mode of existence of world society which, insofar as this dialogue is limited to the deliberation of the overall conditions of international society in terms of their desirability, constitutes the activity of world politics.

Leaving the last two questions for the next section, I shall now focus on the first one. My suggestion is that cosmopolitanism does not have to be equated, in fact, cannot be equated, with any global institutional arrangement but can be understood as a disposition in human conduct in the world of states.

Laws and manners

Political deliberation, according to Oakeshott, presupposes two distinctions. The authority of *lex* should be distinguished both from prudential considerations which necessarily exist in the life of any association and from moral considerations to be taken into account in self-enactment.

The first of these distinctions may be understood as that between policy and politics, the second as that between laws and manners. Nardin and Jackson, while concentrating on the first distinction, offer a view of international *lex* different from Oakeshott's. To address the second distinction, one can also re-assess his account of the relation between international *lex* and possible conceptions of global *jus*. In such re-assessment, there is more to cosmopolitan *jus* than the kind of universalism presupposed in Nardin's and Jackson's understanding of world society.

Here one can start, as Onora O'Neill does, by stating that 'the justice of states will suffice for justice only if we can show that any system of just states will itself be just. But this claim is implausible'.[19] This argument can be expanded to the general criticism of legal positivism thus stated by John Charvet:

> The positivist aspires to provide a wholly self-contained theory of legal authority, but this aspiration cannot be satisfied. For it can be reasonable for each participant in a rule-governed system to acknowledge the authority of the rules solely on the basis of their acceptance by the others only if the various rules available for an authoritative choice all satisfy some basic condition of justice, so that the choice itself is to that extent morally indifferent. Positivism cannot explain that basic condition, since there is no ideal element in its notion of general acceptance.[20]

This is yet another attempt at grounding the authority of *lex* in some notion of *jus* external to it. What is sought is a conception of equality more fundamental than that of Oakeshott: equality of *homines* and not just *cives*. However, there are different ways of arriving at it. Charvet and O'Neill aim to do so without assuming any knowledge of any such equality which comes prior to social interaction.

Both present their constructions against the background of those of John Rawls while revising his distinction between private and public reasoning or metaphysical and political justice. The international analogue of this distinction is the 'classical' separation of the Westphalian principles of *cujus regio ejus religio* and *rex et imperator in regno suo*. According to Charvet, Rawls articulated this distinction so as to meet the communitarian critique of an implicitly Kantian metaphysics of his *Theory of Justice*. Instead of responding by developing a 'nonmetaphysical, but comprehensive, theory of the autonomous person' and showing 'how such a theory can be used to ground an antirealist account of the authority of social

norms', Rawls committed himself to the view of humans who 'are not after all one person, but quite distinct private and public entities'.[21] O'Neill also rejects Kantian two-world metaphysics but sees Rawls's conception of public reasoning as inadequate, in fact, more essentialist than that of Kant.

Thus O'Neill and Charvet approach the private/public and by implication the inside/outside divide from opposing directions and arrive at rather different ideas of cosmopolitanism. Charvet's is 'institutional' insofar as it advocates a confederation of states evolving into a world state, an arrangement grounded in the principle of just social interaction. For O'Neill, all institutional arrangements are subject to questioning and all principles are intrinsically indeterminate, engendering many distinct ways of institutionalization. She seeks to ground equality not in a principle, nor in any set of institutions, but in the modality of reasoning.

Charvet begins by dismantling the idea of 'private' by way of a contractarian procedure. While seeing the standard contractarian device of the 'original position' as useful for the elucidation of the foundational principle of order, he also holds that any such position constructed on Realist premises would be redundant since by claiming *a priori* awareness of the fundamental principles of justice it will already presuppose what has to be established. What, in contrast, underpins his analysis, is a 'historical' claim that at a certain point in the life of human associations their members may be forced to realize that they can no longer rely on any external authority for the maintenance of the moral order enjoyed so far. This leads not so much to a change in political arrangements as to their relegitimation from a new, 'nonmetaphysical', standpoint. Contractarianism here is meant to bring moral and social spheres into a coherent relationship with each other by highlighting the conditionality of both.

Charvet's contract begins on the 'domestic' level. Here contractors are motivated by their recognition of the gains from cooperation, desire to cooperate on the basis of authoritative norms and acknowledgement that the authority and content of these norms spring solely from their own wills. Once this triadic arrangement is supplemented with the ideal constraint of equal bargaining power, contractors have to arrive at the foundational principle of collective moral life: 'the equal value of persons as free or self-directing beings'.[22] But not before they establish a political form, the state, with a dual function of solving the assurance and determinacy problems among cooperators and generating in them the required individualism which is then led 'back to a collective expression of social cooperation'.[23]

The latter point is of particular importance for the 'international' part of the overall construction, since now political autonomy cannot be granted to states unconditionally, regardless of the content of their domestic conceptions of justice. It becomes derivative of the individuals' autonomy which each state is put under obligation to secure for its citizens. However, once Charvet moves his construction to the international level, it becomes clear that here one additional condition is implied in his procedure: it has to unfold within actually existing state-borders. Two interrelated problems arise from this requirement. First, one has to account for the identity of states. Second, significant inequalities in power between actually existing states impose additional requirements onto the centralized interstate authority (whatever its form) in terms of its capacity to satisfy the assurance and determinacy conditions for the moral international society. Further, having been shaped as moral beings domestically, individuals will attempt to interact globally, but since such conduct will obligate them to abstract from their particular situations, and no global individual morality can be presupposed in advance, they will be confronted with assurance and determinacy problems again and will have to fall back on their particular associations. Since, for practical reasons, the assurance and determinacy conditions cannot be satisfied by a world state (although it is not ruled out in principle) this task has to be fulfilled through the relations of states.

Now states are put into a contractarian procedure which, unlike the initial one, does not require pre-existing interstate morality. States, as personalities (assuming that the problem of their identity is solved) are already shaped as moral beings. The best they can agree upon in this manner is to recognize each other's equality as states, that is, to recognize each other's political sovereignty and territorial integrity. While this satisfies the minimal requirements for cooperation on morally just terms, this is not enough. First, identity of particular states remains disputable. Second, in the contemporary world, political sovereignty and territorial integrity in themselves do not make all states truly autonomous agents. Therefore, to be fully just, the society of states has to develop into a confederation with authority to adjudicate on questions of identity, distribution and the use of force. The removal of the rigid private/public divide may sanction the establishment of such a confederation (and eventually a world state) through a kind of 'moral imperialism' checked mostly by prudential considerations.

All in all, international society is not merely a society of states but a 'network of private relations … built up on the basis of the moral life created within each state together with the interstate peace that is made

possible by the states' commitment to respect one another's rights to political sovereignty and territorial integrity'.[24] World society seems to be included into the scope of international society rather than being merely an outgrowth of it, as in Jackson. Yet this is not the case. In fact, Charvet relies on states, and more specifically on *universitates*, more heavily than the principle of equality would allow; and this is what O'Neill criticises as the major shortcoming of the Rawls' work.

Rawls' 'peoples' (and Charvet's 'ethical communities') are hostages not just to actually existing states but to that in these states which corresponds to Oakeshott's *universitas*: 'There is something laborious about anchoring an account of [public] reasoning in a conception of territorial agents not well exemplified in our world, who (if they were exemplified) would acquire the political capacities Rawls imputes to them only by developing the very state and governmental structures from which he tries to detach his argument'.[25] According to O'Neill, Rawls' conception of public reasoning, or political justice, does not sit particularly well with his idea that justice is possible only within bounded communities. In her reading of Kant, any reasoning that appeals to an authority which is not vindicated can only be 'private'. Rigidly policed and jealously protected territorial boundaries are the means for such 'privatization': 'Boundaries of whatever sort are not unquestionable presuppositions of thinking about justice, but rather institutions whose structure raises questions of justice', while 'commitment to cosmopolitan principles does not entail – although it may not rule out – commitment to cosmopolitan political institutions, such as world state or world federation'.[26] Thus, whereas Rawls' and Charvet's constructions are cosmopolitan, or semi-cosmopolitan, as far as proposed institutional arrangements are concerned, they are not that different from Jackson's or Nardin's in terms of the modality of reasoning involved. Only Charvet, contra Rawls, embraces such communitarianism and, contra Jackson and Nardin, refuses to be content with the status quo.

However, in order to attain a standpoint from which to judge the status quo, Charvet, while refusing to assume the universality of natural rights, assumes the universality of the human condition. Although his 'original position' is not an encounter prior to all interaction, its 'metaphysical crisis' befalls the world as a whole uniformly wiping out all previous conceptions of authority. The uniformity of calamity results in a uniform remedy. Although some tribal associations may well satisfy Charvet's requirements for an 'ethical community', the 'great advantage of the state over tribal association lies in its ability to integrate individual interactions over a much wider area and on a much more intensive

scale, and hence to facilitate economic and cultural developments that make it impossible for human beings to return to stateless societies'.[27] It is difficult to see, however, why this of itself should be an advantage for anyone but the citizens of such states. Unless, that is, one accepts the argument of those eighteenth-century thinkers who recognized in modernity the promise of the enrichment of human personality through its reorientation towards history, but recognized also that it came at a price which included not only the crisis of authority (the presupposition of Charvet's contract) but also the temptation of institutional imperialism (such contract's possible implication) as yet another impulse 'to escape from the predicament by imposing it upon all mankind'.

In his response to this temptation Collingwood turned to the experience of man's emancipation from his natural condition so as to posit human freedom or self-determination as a criterion for action. A similar attempt, grounded in the philosophy of history as the story of man's emancipation, was undertaken by Andrew Linklater so as to make possible the 'radical critique of the state which historicism [that is, communitarianism] was unable to supply and modern natural law theory was unwilling to undertake'.[28] However, nature alone, as a background for historical understanding inseparable from the locality of human situations, could not possibly provide a desired universal standpoint. Thus Collingwood turned to 'tradition', as the modality of man's engagements with both nature and his fellow-beings. This shift of attention, from institutional arrangements to the mode of governance, is what, according to Oakeshott, characterized specifically modern European political thinking in the first place. Accordingly, Kantian 'perpetual peace', sought in the confederation of states with republican constitutions, was read as a 'muddle', an unfortunate theoretical retreat from the achievements of earlier thinkers. But is this criticism really fair?

In O'Neill's reading of Kant's political writings, what makes up a republican state is a combination of four characteristics with which Oakeshott, following Aristotle, begins his own exploration of the civil condition. Republican citizens should be free. They recognize their mutual dependence on a single shared legal system. In relation to this legal system they are equal. Finally, non-instrumentality is implied in Kant's idea of public reason as a strictly procedural way of thinking which cannot, and did not for Kant, suggest any institutional arrangement as being intrinsically just or peaceful. Commitment to public reason is neither more nor less than a recognized obligation to proceed so that every action or argument could be understood by anyone else.

Inherent in this interpretation of public reasoning is a reference to what one believes to be possible for others to follow and thus a reference to the 'private' identity (both one's own and that of any possible other one may encounter) shaped prior to the exercise of public reasoning. Recognizing the problem, O'Neill shifts the emphasis in the Kantian account of individual autonomy as self-legislation away from 'some (rather amazing sort of) self that does the legislation' to the activity of 'legislation that is not borrowed from unvindicated sources, that is not derivative, that is both freely chosen and has the form of law'.[29] Thus public reasoning is not exempt from the rule that any reasoned human activity must be structured. Accordingly, although the known boundaries of humanity constitute the only legitimate boundaries of justice, a realistically institutionalized world, and this is what Kant proposed, 'will be a world in which boundaries are not absent, but also one in which there are further institutional structures which support international justice between states and cosmopolitan justice for people when they interact across borders'.[30]

Thus O'Neill's idea of public reasoning requires neither assumptions nor conclusions about the substantive equality of *homines*, save for the belief in their ability to formulate and follow authoritative rules, with further insistence that the authority of these rules cannot be derived from anything but human freedom. However, it also requires a subject which is less amazing than Kant's, namely, a subject whose identity is shaped within some particular association. Freedom itself, then, has to be conceptualized along the lines proposed by Charvet.[31]

It seems that, even with these amendments, cosmopolitanism will still be at odds with Oakeshott's claim that, as *cives*, humans are free to choose anything but their civil obligation which is the counterpart of the authority of *respublica*. Yet *respublica* is treated by Oakeshott, as far as this is possible, in isolation from any environment. The authority of a *societas* is linked to the territorial boundaries established through the interaction of states (also as *universitates*). This does not abrogate the authority of *societas* altogether, but it does increase significantly the 'play' in its overall conditions, even when *societas* is notionally rescued from the presence of *universitas*. Accordingly, the territorial arrangements of a given state necessarily fall into the scope of the deliberation of the overall conditions of 'its' *societas* in terms of their desirability. And just as *homines* are responsive to the invitation to live 'so far as is possible as an immortal', *cives* can respond to the call of non-instrumental 'public reasoning', provided it is a discursive rather than demonstrative engagement, and to converse as far as is possible as participants to the

conversation of *mankind*, 'simply' because they are capable of thinking about those beyond their own borders.

Put differently, O'Neill's 'public reason' can be incorporated into the Oakeshottian framework as a 'sentiment' in which *cives* may choose to attend to the overall conditions of their *societas*. Insofar as such deliberation is limited to a given *societas*, it remains the activity of politics. The activity of world politics has to be directed at the overall conditions of an ensemble of moral practices enacted and ruled by *societates* which, in the language of the classical approach, constitute international society. Its counterpart in O'Neill is 'institutional structures which support international justice between states'. A world divided by boundaries policed by *universitates* would be international system. As the modern European state can be understood in terms of both *universitas* and *societas*, so international system and international society make up international order. They coincide in space and time, and neither evolves into the other, although the density of each may vary across time and space. Both are human inventions and what distinguishes them is the mode of human association.

O'Neill's structures supporting 'cosmopolitan justice for people when they interact across borders' make up world society. As there is no need, in Jackson's account, to armour international society with a government, territory or armies of its own, there is no need to think about the structures of world society as being more solid than, to use Oakeshott's expression, 'what a people dreams in its earthly sleep'. Only 'a people' now has to be substituted not with an impersonal 'mankind' but with the individuals capable of visiting each other in their civilizational dreams. Now the question is whether reason alone can possibly impel them to do so. After all, both Charvet's and O'Neill's constructions, different as they are, are grounded in the assumption that it can.

World politics

Like international system and international society, then, world society is a mode of human relationship. To deny its existence or importance here and now would be similar to denying the existence or importance of self-enactment for human conduct. To expect its arrival, through the evolution of international society, in the future, is to endow international society with the character of a global *universitas*. Rather, world society is to be found, if at all, in the ongoing conversation among diverse moral traditions unfolding within or across the boundaries established and upheld through the practices of international system

and international society. The stories told in this conversation do not cross state-boundaries easily, not least because in such stories individual identity is linked to that of a closed territorial unit, while adventures of self-enactment are routinely likened to heroic conquests. Characteristically, O'Neill's idea of cosmopolitanism, while treating all territorial boundaries as conditional, stumbles at the amazing character of a self-legislating subject, whereas the global communitarian contract of Charvet, while rejecting any objective standards against which to measure our thinking about individual identity, cannot account for the identity of states.

Perhaps this tension cannot be resolved. However, the task of a theory of politics is to offer an understanding, not a resolution. Thus, despite the superficial similarity between the classical location of international society in-between international system and world society and the way Oakeshott locates human conduct in-between two modes of fabrication, Oakeshott's account of the overall constellation offers an understanding of the individual identity that the classical approach, with its exclusive focus on the practices of statespeople, cannot provide. Not the least because the authority of statespeople depends 'on myths of origin and projections of the edge of time' continuously narrated by 'ordinary' people.[32] Accordingly, what Nardin presents as 'the most striking feature of customary international law' (that its standards, as standards of state-conduct, are rooted in the judgements of the inhabitants of various moral traditions), for Oakeshott would be 'not a paradox but a truism': any system of *lex* 'regulates its own creation' (151, note 5) by establishing who assumes the roles of legislators, adjudicators and rulers within it and how they assume these roles. The most striking feature of international *lex* indeed is that it often does so through such institutions as war. Yet even in war it is possible to distinguish policy from politics and laws from manners, so as to distinguish world ruling from world politics.

I shall draw these distinctions by addressing in turn the two questions raised but put by in the beginning of the previous section. Whether in the 'classical' alliance of international system and international society the latter inevitably becomes the hostage of the former. Whether the ongoing conversation or dialogue between diverse moral traditions can be understood as the mode of existence of world society. Here I shall draw on the so-called critical understanding of identity, arguing that Oakeshott's account of politics is closer to this mode of theorizing rather than the classical approach.

Policy and politics

The problem with the classical location of international society in-between international system and world society, codified in Hedley Bull's taxonomy

of traditions which associated the classical approach with the name of Grotius and distinguished it from the realism of Hobbes and the idealism of Kant, lies with the inadequacy of both classical and neorealist understanding of personality or identity as such.[33] This results in what Erik Ringmar describes as 'the two-way vanishing trick': either the state, endowed with a Grotian (or Humean) character, vanishes into the manifold of conventions that make up international society the durability of which this state was meant to explain or, in its Hobbesian variety, it is kept outside of international system thus making any account of the latter non-falsifiable.[34]

To maintain their own identities, however, both schools put forward their stories in which the state reappears, just like man reappears in the stories which Hobbesians tell about his redemption or Humeans about his futile attempts to 'catch himself'. Both stories may be flawed in their own terms or those of their rivals; but as stories they stand, if understood appropriately: as neither more nor less than a succession of metaphors arranged in a particular way for a particular reason. And there are compelling reasons for taking metaphors and stories composed of them for what they are – an integral part of any theorizing that attempts to understand the conduct of humans as story-tellers.

Rival stories are employed to promote interests under the conditions of stability or to foster identities in times of crises. In a story of world politics which purports to provide an account of both continuity and change, law and war appear as 'not so much contradictory moments – "morality" and its negation – as complementary processes which presuppose each other'.[35] The outcome of this interplay is recognition granted to a particular kind of actors. What such actors, be they sovereign princes, social forces or religious movements, are is 'neither a question of what essences constitute [them] nor a question of how [they] conclusively should be defined, but instead a question of how [they] are seen and a question of which stories are told about [them]'; for what we are as subjects, more generally, 'is neither more nor less than the total collection of stories that we tell and that are told about us'.[36]

As far as the stories told within International Relations go, the classical approach (what Richard Ashley, following Habermas' classification of cognitive interests, terms 'practical realism') concentrates on a social order derived 'from a usually protracted and arduous (although not necessarily intentional) struggle to establish and maintain a consensus of co-reflective self-understanding: *a tradition*'.[37] However, as long as the self central to this tradition is equated with the state effective in its use of power, practical realism inevitably allies itself with its 'technical'

(instrumentalist) counterpart against any possibility of a universal consensus other than that achieved by the only legitimate participants in such an order, states, concerning the proper handling of power. This is not an alliance of equals. Practical realism, by accepting the exclusive legitimacy of the state, enjoys in it only partial autonomy, whereas technical realism, due to its unfailing capacity to reduce all possible concerns to the single measure of efficiency, purports to establish its total autonomy and to capture the 'essence' of the realist tradition.

Thus technical realism constitutes, as it were, the hegemonic core of the overall construction, whereas practical realism adds only a hermeneutic superstructure which, no matter how refined or extended, cannot alter the fundamentals of such an order. Accordingly, 'the only kind of criticism that would possibly do away with realism is a global revolutionary change that would end the current order of domination without establishing a new one in its place'.[38] This Ashley launches, as far as the order of theorizing is concerned, by attacking the neorealist base of the realist tradition, exposing the connection between its individualism, utilitarianism and statism.[39] Yet criticism alone rarely brings down hegemonic orders. In his next move Ashley engages realism on its own terms: 'the job is a matter of doing interpretative violence to a tradition notorious for its celebration of violence. It is a matter of the violent and surreptitious appropriation of a realist community in order to impose a new direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game. It is a matter, in short, of participating in the making of history'.[40]

The argument, however, is also targeted at the classics. International society 'is not hidden away in some deep structure, customary rules, immanent revolutionary imperatives, or murky truth behind and unifying a fragmented political experience. It is right there on the surface, in the regularized practices, techniques, and rituals of realist power politics'.[41] Now interpretation is not hostage to the 'technical' understanding of power but an exercise of power itself, as seen from afar so that 'there is only interpretation, and interpretation itself is comprehended as a practice of domination occurring on the surface of history'.[42] Consequently, there is no interpreting subject in sight to be recognized for anything but a contingent nodal point on the turbulent surface of power. As Ashley puts it later, to participate in the business of mancraft is to do the job of the state which, by imposing itself in the form of the borderline between domesticated order and threatening 'war', re-creates a 'man' incapable of recognizing the humanity of 'strangers', or coping with his own estrangement for that matter, because all otherness is construed as a threat and in this capacity constitutes 'manhood'. To displace

the state from its dominant position is not to rob it of its power but to cut off the moorings of this power, including the idea of subjectivity. It is no longer a question of participation in the making of history, but one of 'the historicization and politicization of man as the corner and foundation of modern narratives of history'.[43]

In other words, it seems, the only alternative to the policy of realism is the permanent revolution or exile and thus, again, an impulse to impose the predicament onto the whole of mankind so that the anticipated end of all order and the end of subject are one. This oneness, however, is recognized by Ashley for what it is: yet another promise of finality and yet another paradox. The subject-in-estrangement, as a model for an authentically critical enterprise, turns out to be conspicuously similar to the central figure of the tradition he undertakes to criticize: a heroic, tough-minded character galloping 'across the surfaces of historical experience, a stranger to every place, seldom pausing to … explore any locale, eschewing all commitments, always moving as if chasing some fast-retreating end or fleeing just ahead of the grasp of some relentless pursuer'.[44]

Instead of denying this paradoxical similarity, Ashley steps back to introduce a very old character onto the scene: the itinerant *condottiere*, an 'uprooted, estranged, nomadic figure, who is never far from engagement in battle but who, in his engagements, is committed to nothing other than an abstract and mobile will to territorialize, to make some sort of sovereign territorialization of life work, wherever he might be'.[45] His 'subjective posture', characteristic though it may be of the 'conversational battlefield' of International Relations, is not uniform. Under conditions of estrangement, that is, when 'the subject does not relate to self and circumstances in a relation of unquestioned familiarity', it assumes three different shapes: 'a project, an effect, or a work of art … in which one's own participation is required'.[46]

The driving impulse in all the encounters of the itinerant *condottiere*, as in all the struggles for power and peace of the Augustinian realist, is this loss of 'unquestioned familiarity', understood by realism as the lack of a given, fixed 'balance' and by poststructuralism as the absence of a fixed, essential 'centre'. To this he responds, first, by establishing a realm where 'a word … can never lack for power, … can never fail to prevail, because its claims to represent the ultimate source of power can never be doubted'; second, by accepting the impossibility of such a realm and compensating for this loss 'by effecting here or there whatever can be made effectively to *count* as a territory of self-evident being' through an act of will, 'a will to territorialize, a territorializing intentionality, in the

making of self and selves'; and third, by refusing to be 'mesmerized by the works he creates, … trapped within the territories he would inscribe, … to mistake his renditions for earthly realizations of the ideal'.[47]

Thus Ashley's own, 'critical', story returns to its starting point, the triadic rendition of the realist tradition. Now, however, 'criticism' is not meant, as was the case with the critical theory's emancipatory project, and as is the case with both O'Neill's and Charvet's accounts of public reasoning, to widen the hermeneutic circle of the classical approach so as 'to embrace the whole of international society and its history, not just a "true tradition" of statesmanship'.[48] Rather, insofar as the three modes of estrangement make up a single character, criticism is located in the very centre of this character and this tradition, while insisting that no such centre can ever be fixed within any territory of meaning and is 'ever nomadic, ever ready to move on in search, not of a destination, not of an end, but of whatever localities might be made the object of a strategy, an art of life, a way of problematizing self and selves'.[49]

It is not altogether impossible to relate Ashley's three modes of estrangement to Oakeshott's traditions of Reason and Nature, Will and Artifice, and Rational Will. Yet more immediate connection exists between 'a word that never lacks for power' and Hobbesian 'absolutism', between that which 'counts as a territory of self-evident being' and Humean 'conventionalism', between refusal to get trapped within the territories once inscribed and Nietzschean 'genealogy'. What makes all these stories 'political' is not merely that they 'support, or undermine, a certain perspective on the world and hence also a certain distribution of power' but also the manner in which, by envisaging particular trajectories through which the past has turned into the present and might develop towards the future, they set the parameters for possible action: 'The tension of a plot needs to be released … and release can only come about through the actions that the characters of the story perform. From the perspective of these characters, the "directedness" of the story – its movement from "once-upon-a-time" to "happily-ever-after" – thus comes to correspond to the intentional quality of action'.[50]

In the critical story, at least as it is presented here, release is sought not in the immediate transcendence of the monotonous and repetitive world of realism but in the gradual effacement of it through that very recurrence and repetition on which realism insists. Far from celebrating the 'death of subject' or the end of the territorial state, this story presents its subject and the world it inhabits as being at once unbearably heavy and unbearably light, while world politics appears in it as an order-effacing procedure of continuous return.[51]

There is, however, one quality in the character of Ashley's itinerant *condottiere* which distinguishes him from the Oakeshottian 'self-employed adventurers of unpredictable fancy', namely that: 'Even from his own most beautiful accomplishments he is estranged, knowing that they can never be more than contingent effects, ever threatening to come undone'.[52] Not that Oakeshottian individuals are unaware of the fragility of what they call poetry, friendship or love. The difference has more to do with their willingness to form attachments and the corresponding belief that without some such ability no awareness of either space or time or poetry would be possible. Ashley's story questions the conqueror of the hegemonic discourse and lures him into accepting the wanderer in oneself, someone who is 'trying like the Flying Dutchman to escape from himself'; not so much because of the 'closeness of the home atmosphere, the coldness there, the intolerable ache of discords always repeated and right notes never struck' but rather because 'the world is too much with us, and we are too much with ourselves'.[53] What this story assumes without much questioning (and not without some reasons) is the war-inspired imagery of the human condition. One possible response to this would be not to deny the prevalence of conflict in human life but to assert that there is more to life than one particular kind of conflict:

> while it may seem plausible that the prevalence of political individualism on its own be attributed to the fortunate outcome of politico-military struggles in history … it is much less obvious that the hold on us of the reigning images of sexual love and personal fulfilment is to be explained in the same terms. We can indeed speak of these emerging through a struggle. But this has partly been the struggle of daily life, in which individuals and couples strive to make sense of their lives and give shape to their hopes, fears and aspirations. … [We] still have some way to go before we understand the terms and the nature of this struggle … [but war] and the preparations for war … don't even begin to give us the key.[54]

Ashley's analysis of tradition, I want to suggest, is misplaced because any system of relations that does not include some reference to these 'struggles of daily life' cannot be properly called 'tradition'. At the same time, tradition proper includes references both to the world and to society and thus to what may be described as world society.

Laws and manners

Like O'Neill and Charvet, Ashley problematizes the link between man and the state. Man in his story acquires more interesting contours than

in those of Nardin or Jackson but, to dwell on Jackson's metaphor, he also happens to be a Sisyphus condemned to carrying a *Machtstaat* on his shoulders while reflecting on its and his own closely interlinked fortunes. The link between international system and international society remains intact and, although this alliance is no longer opposed to the ongoing dialogue of individuals, the dialogue itself turns out to be a 'conversational battlefield'. An 'extreme of loneliness and impotence' this image indicates is reminiscent of 'the most antipolitical experience there is', death, now deprived of its finality by the figure of eternal return.[55] In this, the story is close to that of realism indeed: 'Human beings are not prepared to accept that there are conditions – the "state of nature" – which does not end. … Since it has no proper ending, the … story has no readily graspable *sense morale* and no morally edifying conclusion can be drawn from it. Not surprisingly, the being – the state – which appears in, and through, this account will at the same time seem unbearably heavy and unbearably light'.[56] After all, even Nietzsche did not restrict his list of possible histories to the antiquarian and critical ones. There was also the 'monumental history' which, when at its best, was 'addressed to political actors, to remind them that great deeds were performed by notable men and that what was once feasible is at least possible again'.[57]

The specific problem of International Relations, according to Martin Wight, is that there are few great deeds to report and even less notable reporters.[58] The classical approach emerged as a response to this challenge: Yes, there is little that is given to us by the great political theorists, but the difference that today makes requires a re-enactment of their conversation, to be staged in Kaliningrad rather than Königsberg.[59] Quite often, however, it slipped into the antiquarian understanding of history as a storage of ideas in need of re-legitimization in the form of the 'true tradition'.

Responding to Hans Morgenthau's evocation of such a tradition with its alleged reliance on 'higher faculties of mind' needed by statesmen to cope with the 'tragic sense of life' and 'the unresolved discord, contradictions and conflicts which are inherent in the nature of things', Oakeshott remarked:

> This comes pretty close to the higher nonsense. … What, of course, the statesman requires is nothing higher than the ordinary 'faculties' and ordinary knowledge that everyone (even the convinced rationalist) uses every day in the conduct of his life and in his relations with other men. … To children and to romantic women, but to no one else, it may appear 'tragic' that we cannot enjoy Spring without Winter,

> eternal youth, and passion always at the height of its beginning. And only a rationalistic reformer will confuse the imperfection which can be remedied with the so-called imperfection which cannot, and will think of the irremovability of the latter as a tragedy. The rest of us know that no rationalistic justice (with its project of approximating people to things), and no possible degree of human prosperity, can ever remove mercy and charity from their place of first importance in the relations of human beings, and know also that this situation cannot properly be considered either imperfect or a tragedy. (RP 107–8)

Characteristically, Oakeshott's own image of government as 'the cool touch of the mountain that one feels in the plain even on the hottest summer day' (R 434) is built up from such images as 'a favourite view', 'the death of friends', 'the retirement of a favourite clown', 'the loss of abilities enjoyed and their replacement by others' (409). Such a government should be capable of injecting into the heat of the daily clash of beliefs, 'into our enthusiasm for saving the souls of our neighbours or of all mankind … an ingredient, not of reason (how should we expect that?) but of irony that is prepared to counteract one vice by another, of the raillery that deflates extravagance without itself pretending to wisdom, of the mockery that disperses tension'. But it is an addition to all these human enthusiasms and extravagances, not a denial of them. It is needed 'to do for us the scepticism we have neither the time nor the inclination to do for ourselves' (R 433–4).

To translate this into the language of the classical approach, a 'conservative' acquiescence to the authority of international society presupposes quiescence, a point of serenity and stillness worthy of being conservative about. In the case of human conduct in the world of states, this is likely to be found not in contingently established territorial boundaries, and thus in the reified alliance with international system, but in the daily experiences which cannot be closed into a 'world' by any single vision. Our ability, as well as the inclination, to explore the horizons beyond those of immediate perception is rooted in the experiences of growing up, meeting a friend ('My, but he has grown old') or hearing of the death of an acquaintance:

> how suddenly the person's mode of being changes, how permanent he becomes, how much purer, not necessarily better in a moral or affectionate way, but rather with closed and clearly defined contours – all this for the simple and evident reason that we can expect no more from him, and can do nothing more for him. The experience of this

> extreme case seems … to be a mode of knowledge. What emerges from it is truth. … That something suddenly stands still and remains standing still seems to help the truth to speak.[60]

This truth intimates not only the interplay of the continuity and discontinuity of time and space but also their reality. Although the world is available to us only through language, our consciousness of history, and thus of ourselves as 'historic' self-enacted individuals, 'is determined by real events rather than left on its own to float free over against the past'. These events are real insofar as they do not let themselves be forgotten and call for decisions that cannot be suspended: the foreignness 'which we experience forces us to deal with it and … to take its truth upon ourselves'.[61]

No society, no association, however 'civil', can shield itself from this experience of foreignness by its vernacular moral language because any such language is inevitably saturated with this experience. Thus Alasdair MacIntyre links the interminability of contemporary debates, and conflict more generally, to the incoherence of our conceptual vocabulary with many of its terms being unrecognized survivals of forgotten and radically different ethical systems. More precisely, it is in the character of rationalism to misconstrue the multilayered nature of moral discourse and to exacerbate disagreement by postulating agreement as an absolute value. Nietzschean genealogy understands the problem acutely but adds the despair of endless perspectivism to the failure of the morality of rules to cope with contingency. Yet there is a positive addition to the negative morality of rules enabling humans to face those situations in which a movement between different sets of rules has to be considered in the absence of any readily available rule for such consideration. The starting point is to recognize that to enter an association is to be drafted into one social role or another. Roles entail dispositions for acting, virtues, and so with roles, as with rules, one has to be able to move between them without experiencing incoherencies amidst such dispositions. Roles are shaped by wider social contexts – practices – with their intrinsic standards of excellence. Since we partake of different practices throughout our lives, practices need to be part of a broader context which ensures the overall coherence of different standards.

This is tradition, an image of the broadest available, historically contingent social whole within which various practices are so constituted that the intrinsic dispositions of each of them cohere with those of all possible others. More precisely, this is an image implicitly held by every human association, however small or localized, 'a dream that a people dreams in

its earthly sleep', and continuously negotiated with its neighbours. This imagined order of dispositions is itself a disposition, that of a conditionally well-ordered tradition.[62]

No state, no bounded community can embody tradition thus understood. Equating tradition with local communities leaves them with nothing to guard themselves against 'corruption by narrowness, by complacency, by prejudice against outsiders and by a whole range of other deformities, including those that arise from a cult of local community'.[63] Equating it with the state entails outcomes perhaps even more 'ludicrous or disastrous or both', for the counterpart of such misconception of the state 'is a misconception of its citizens as constituting a *Volk*, a type of collectivity whose bonds are simultaneously to extend to the entire body of citizens and yet to be as binding as the ties of kinship and locality. In a modern large-scale nation-state no such collectivity is possible and the pretence that it is is always an ideological disguise for sinister realities'. The modern state does provide important goods, but as long as 'the rhetoric of the nation-state presents it as the provider of something that is indeed, in this stronger sense, a common good, that rhetoric is a purveyor of dangerous fictions'.[64]

Insofar as the state cannot provide this kind of good, the small class of statespeople routinely referred to as 'politicians' in their capacity of the agents of the state have little, if anything, to contribute to the activities of deliberation and persuasion constitutive of politics proper, neither domestically nor internationally. This is not to say that genuine 'politicians' cannot, on occasion, occupy this or that office of the state, only that the occupation of any such office, of itself, does not make one a 'politician'. Accordingly, world politics is likely to be found, if at all, not at the conferences of the Plenipotentiaries but in the comparative study of local associations 'at their best and at their worst, and most of all examples of communities that have been or are open to alternative possibilities and that sometimes move towards the better and sometimes towards the worst':

> What such comparative studies will bring home to us is both the variety of social forms within which networks of giving and receiving can be institutionalized and the variety of ways in which such networks can be sustained and strengthened or weakened and destroyed. Different conditions pose different threats and in turn require different responses. Yet the tasks that have to be undertaken to meet these threats share a great deal in common. So it is, for example, with the tasks of providing for the security of a local community from internal

> crime or external aggression, tasks that can never safely be handed over completely to the agencies of the state. (On occasion it is the danger presented by just those agencies that has to be guarded against.)[65]

A specific contribution of International Relations to such interdisciplinary inquiry may consist in exploring such localities in relation to the idea of world order as constituted by international system and international society. This will involve the 'critical' task of unbundling the territoriality of international society by distinguishing it from international system: 'To this task belongs the destruction of all romantic illusions regarding the good old days and the snug security provided by a Christian cosmos', while International Relations will ally itself with philosophy which recognizes itself 'as a kind of secularized eschatology, possessing a kind of expectancy which takes pride in expecting nothing definite, but being, as it were, a kind of challenge.'[66] There would also be a place, then, for a 'conservative' engagement that does not seek to defend the state from such a criticism or to protect international society by means of international system, but reaches out instead towards tradition as a kind of world society on the assumption that 'the technological dream entertained by our time is really just a dream, a series of changes and transformations in our world, which, when compared to the actual realities of our life, has a phantom-like and arbitrary character':

> What is involved is not a plea for the preservation of the existing order. The concern is simply with a readjustment of our consciousness. The conservative, like the revolutionary, seems to … require a similar rectification of his understanding. The unavoidable and unpredictable realities – birth and death, youth and age, native and foreign, determination and freedom – demand the same recognition from both groups. These realities have measured out what men can plan and what they can achieve. Continents and empires, revolutions in power and in thought, the planning and organization of life on our planet and outside it, will not be able to exceed a measure which perhaps no one knows and to which, nevertheless, all are subject.[67]

In both cases, what is involved is the exploration of limits. Insofar as politics generally is understood as the exploration of not just any limits but the limits of the practice of civility, world politics may be understood as an activity of individuals thinking and speaking about the overall conditions of international society as it exists alongside international

system. Here everyone 'must learn to speak for himself and in the process establish his own history. And, should even the most farfetched mechanization of society be successful, man will not lose this uniqueness. The age of *post-history* into which we are now proceeding will find its limits in this distinctiveness of man'.[68]

Tradition and neotraditionalism

International order, then, can be understood in terms of two ideal characters similar to Oakeshott's enterprise and civil associations. The former does not have to be a cooperative association of states, just as the latter does not have to be a global association of individuals. What matters rather is the terms of association. A transactional association of states as *universitates* would be similar in its postulates and characteristics to the international system of neorealism, while civil association of the same states as *societates* would closely match the international society of the classical approach. However, international order could never exist without some idea of world society. If the difference between international system and international society may be understood in terms of the distinction between policy and politics, then international society and world society are related to each other as laws and manners, or civil conduct and good conduct.

What radically distinguishes world order thus understood from Oakeshottian civil association is not so much the absence of centralized authority, 'anarchy', or the presence of the international system within which the most arbitrary satisfactions are pursued with impunity, but the fact that, unlike the practices of good conduct within a given human association, world society does not have a single centre. A closer look at Oakeshott's understanding of good conduct, however, suggests that no such centre is actually required. For example, MacIntyre's understanding of tradition as a synthesizing practice echoes Oakeshott's description of moral practice as a practice of all practices, while Nardin, in his later study of Oakeshott, argues that the 'practices' of *On Human Conduct* are the 'traditions of action' of *Rationalism in Politics*. Yet these practices are even less homogeneous than the individual modes of experience, themselves shown to be anything but coherent in *Experience and Its Modes*. Moral practice, precisely because it is tradition, invokes two idioms of inquiry, history and practice, but also a conversation between them.

In the case of the practice of civility, *respublica*, its centre is established by law and upheld through ruling. However, civilization thus construed can only be secure, as Collingwood argued, insofar as it proceeds in a

'sentimental' manner, by upholding its historically acquired disposition and thus turning its own diversity and imperfection into its major assets: 'What ensures the defeat of barbarism … is the literally infinite possibility of varying the nature of the thing called civilization, leaving it recognizable in its diversity' (NL 41.7). Since 'sentiment' for Collingwood is the evolutionary 'process in which the same thing begins as an emotion and ends as a thought' (41.33), civilization itself becomes, as in MacIntyre, a quest, a process to be understood historically. Oakeshottian 'sentiment' is 'disposition': not merely a choice of an attitude in which to perform a practical action but itself a practical performance in which 'nothing is in progress; there is no promise, only fulfilment'. To understand this kind of performance, one has to participate in the conversation between history and practice.

The way this conversation unfolds in the activity of politics, it continuously decentres the structure of *respublica*, and it is through such decentring that *civitas* is enacted. Viewed this way, world politics is the activity through which the *respublica* of international society, distinguished from the enterprise of international system, is intermittently transformed into *civitas*. Such transformation is possible only if there is a subject whose self-understanding implies his continuous participation in tradition, as a conversation between history and practice, while this conversation itself belongs to the conversation of *mankind*. In the next chapter, I shall restate, by way of conclusion, my reading of Oakeshott's argument as a whole, emphasizing the character of such subject in its relation to the idea of mankind.

7
Neotraditionalism in International Relations

I have outlined an idea of tradition as a conversation between two modes of inquiry, practice and history, in terms of which conduct *inter homines* can be understood. Conversation is not a formally structured mode of understanding, like history or practice themselves, but an engagement pointing towards the absolute presuppositions of the condition of modernity. Thus tradition necessarily overflows the modes of experience that constitute it, and this excess is what makes it possible to recognize the conclusions and the presuppositions of practical and historical understanding as being questionable. As a non-instrumental practice, authoritative in its character but not formalized through the institution of a centralized set of authoritative offices, tradition constitutes what the classical approach in International Relations described (without really defining) as world society and understood as a moral ground for the operation of international order.

International order, in turn, can be understood in terms of two ideal characters, enterprise and civil associations, or international system and international society. International system is not a cooperative association of the actually existing states, although this is what, on occasion, it may well be, but a transactional association of states as themselves *universitates*, cooperative enterprise associations. In this case, on both domestic and international levels, the terms of association are set by the interests of the associates. Similarly, international society is not a *societas* of the actually existing states, but an association of states understood as *societates*, so that the associates are related to each other in terms of the recognition of the non-instrumental authoritative rules and procedures.

Precisely because international society may be understood as governing the relations of states even in the absence of a centralized global government, it is a moral practice different from tradition or world society.

International society lays out the terms of just or civil conduct, whereas tradition sets the conditions of good conduct, a distinction sometimes presented as that between justice 'political' and 'metaphysical'. I have argued that political action, although focused exclusively on the conditions of international society, is possible only from the 'metaphysical ground' of world society or tradition. In doing, world politics requires distinguishing international society from both international system and world society. This means that political prescriptions should be presented in the form of an authoritative rule or procedure that may become part of international society, but a rule or procedure recognized in its traditional character, that is, recognized in its relation to the conversation of mankind. On the level of understanding, conversation between history and practice, as two distinct identifiable modes of experience, can be itself identified as 'tradition'.

The reason for calling the conversation of practice and history tradition, for it could be called otherwise, lies in the somewhat paradoxical fortunes of the word within contemporary International Relations. Theorists usually referred to as 'traditionalists' were hardly concerned with the re-enactment of some by-gone tradition, either in conduct or in theorizing. Their thinking was marked with the appreciation of the loss of the tradition of state-conduct and the absence of it in theory. Yet it is this very loss, rather than its consequences or possible practical responses to it, that they by and large failed to theorize adequately.

To give just one characteristic example, in which the worlds of theory and conduct actually came together in a rather peculiar way, Henry Kissinger, in his theoretical application of Weber's taxonomy of rule to international relations, associated instrumental rationality with domestic bureaucratic structures, traditionalist – with the historically acquired moral frameworks of particular states, and charismatic – with diplomacy. The latter stood for a mode of action not routinized through stable institutional arrangements. Insofar as diplomacy is the process of the continuous readjustment of the domestic 'traditional' frameworks, it sees in them neither an achievement of a people nor a set of bureaucratic techniques but 'merely an object for negotiation internationally'.[1] A somewhat unintended, although not unvalued, by-product of this negotiation is a tenuous moral framework established by statesmen among themselves. This is never really a 'tradition', for those who, like Metternich or Bismarck, attempt to maintain it, cannot rely on any lasting consensus but have to choose between the instrumental, 'essentially technical virtuosity' or strive to achieve 'the tragic stature' inseparable from the charismatic posture 'which has enabled the spirit to transcend

an impasse at so many crisis in history: the ability to contemplate an abyss, not with the detachment of a scientist, but as a challenge to overcome – or to perish in the process'.[2]

Assessing Kissinger's practical performance in a series of brief journalistic essays, Hans Morgenthau called it 'the diplomacy of movement', described Kissinger himself as a *polytropos*, 'many-sided' or 'of many appearances', and concluded in the same 'tragic' vein: 'The statesman, in order to be truly great regardless of success or failure, must behold himself not as the infallible arbiter of the destiny of men, but as the handmaiden of something which he may use but cannot control. *Fortuna* smiles only on those who concede her the last word'.[3]

What slipped into the argument in this manner was not only a certain view of politics proper but also a very specific ontopolitical interpretation of that 'abyss' by confronting which one can act politically. This interpretation, recently referred to as 'the tragic-heroic paradigm', underpins most of the reflectivist characterizations of the political.[4] Only now it is recognized as a tradition in its own right, stemming from the ancients through the Kantian critique of aesthetic judgement up to the acceptance that 'beauty is the last veil that envelops the Monstrous'.[5]

This tone of voice is so completely absent in Oakeshott's argument that it is the way this argument 'sounds', rather than the way it proceeds, that often contributes to his identification as a conservative. Who else would dare to declare, in the heated intellectual atmosphere of the Cold War, that the 'shadow of the atomic bomb … obscures the diagnosis' because 'the havoc wrought in Eastern Europe … is as bad as any atomic devastation; a powerful mass of deluded human beings is far more destructive than any bomb' (V 109–10). Having mentioned this point in the beginning, I now want to re-visit it in connection with the question of world order.

The absolute presupposition of Oakeshott's philosophy is conversation, and so it is 'the tone of voice', be it in utterance or in deed, rather than any conclusive demonstrative argument, that decides the matter. But the matter at stake is 'mankind'. The conversation of mankind is not a small talk between a number of well-ordered, well-behaved universes of discourse. Universes do not converse, politely or otherwise. It is the conversation of mankind conducted, ill or well, by way of escaping from one set of modal conditions into another, so that everything here is in movement and everyone is a *polytropos*. There is in this engagement not only the 'escape of all escapes', poetry, but also its counterpart, a pathological condition of speechlessness: not an organic malfunction, but a state of absolute discursive indistinction, corresponding, in practice, to

the ultimate form of totalitarianism, in which the plurality of the modes of expression is neither 'mediated' nor 'overcome' but lost in the deluge of meaningless words, not with a bang but a whimper.

The latter theme appears in Oakeshott only towards the very end and almost in passing. To highlight it, I shall summarize my reading of Oakeshott from a slightly different angle, by drawing on the contemporary arguments offering an ontopolitical interpretation which is at once 'fundamental' and 'co-existentialist'.

Tradition

The emphasis on co-existence, conduct *inter homines*, is what markedly distinguishes *On Human Conduct* from the discussion of practice as 'existence' in *Experience and Its Modes*. From this, however, it does not follow that Oakeshott abandons his earlier account of practice altogether. Rather, in *On Human Conduct* and *On History*, he sums up the overall development of his argument. In the former, prior to the introduction of rules and practices, Oakeshott discusses human conduct as a web of reciprocal performances in which agents are seeking imagined and wished-for outcomes, situations to be, responding to their own diagnoses of their current situations. Prescriptions they issue for themselves are the same substantive choices as in *Experience* and any theoretical reconciliation of what is with what ought to be is as impossible as ever. An agent diagnosing his situation as 'I am in debt' may choose to resolve it by writing and selling a general theory of insolvency, but this theory itself will not relieve him from choosing to address his current situation by writing a book rather than by selling his violin or by fleeing London for the Andaman Islands.

Authoritative non-instrumental moral rules and practices are introduced later as a historically acquired response to this predicament. A lot is said by Oakeshott in their favour. Yet, as far as the deadlines of doing is concerned, they are also an attempt 'to escape from the predicament by imposing it upon *all mankind*'. That moral rules and practices imply a universalist inclination is confirmed by a number of statements in *On Human Conduct* and *On History*. In the former work, Oakeshott states that the validation of authority, when it becomes an explicit engagement, inevitably 'moves up the scale of authorizations'. In the latter, he qualifies Hobbes's legalism by saying that, for the genuine rule of law to be found 'on the ground', this movement has to be arrested because the *rule* of law requires a combination of the formal character of law and the moral-legal acceptability of the conditions imposed by law on the

vernacular language of moral conduct, itself a reflection of a moral imagination of associates 'more stable in its style of deliberation than in its conclusions'.

In the first essay of *On Human Conduct*, where governance is not yet discussed, this 'style of deliberation' is already present in the distinction between self-disclosure and self-enactment as two considerations in moral conduct. The criterion of worthy self-disclosure is the adequacy of the agent's subscription to a given moral practice. That of self-enactment is authenticity, achieved in subscription to practices less emphatic than those involved in self-disclosure. What is sought in self-enactment is yet another escape from the 'long littleness of life', but this time an *individual* achievement and thus also an escape, not from practices altogether, but from a certain deadliness of their localized vernacular abridgements.

Now the argument of *Experience* is significantly modified indeed. In the earlier work, the world of practice comes closest to its self-fulfilment, through an intermittent reconciliation of 'what is' and 'not yet', in religion and poetry. Later, in his study of Hobbes, Oakeshott states that the only acceptable view of religion presupposes a deity who is a law-giver, and this view is restated in *On Human Conduct* where religion becomes 'a reconciliation to nothingness'. It is reconciliation because, in religious belief, the scale of authorizations cannot be moved up any further. It is reconciliation to nothingness because, while exposing the hollowness of doing to the full, it does not escape it. Thus, whenever self-enactment takes a religious turn, it is drawn back towards self-disclosure, even if it does not lapse into it entirely. That is, reconciliation to nothingness is also reconciliation to the plurality of the vernacular languages of moral intercourse and to the pastness of each of them. However, the reassurance offered by a familiar language does not cancel out the inclination to look after one's soul. The abolition of moral diversity is simply a muddled way of trying to live each day as an immortal, and to deny to Oakeshott himself any 'monistic yearnings' of his own would be a rash conclusion.

Discussion of religion in *On Human Conduct* establishes a link between religion and poetry restated towards the end of the book when deity is presented not only as a law-giver but also as a 'god of majestic imagination'. While discussing self-enactment, Oakeshott invokes 'contemplation' as a mode of understanding expected in it, and, in 'The Voice of Poetry', contemplation is exclusively associated with poetry. Yet, in a private letter written shortly after the publication of *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott expresses his doubts about the possibility of identifying an agent in self-enactment with a work of art.[6]

The grounds for such doubts are given already in 'The Voice of Poetry', where Oakeshott's account of practice is close to that of *Experience*, but includes one further distinction: between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. Oakeshott's main concern is not so much with the reversal of the hierarchy between the two as with exposing the self-contradictory character of *vita contemplativa*. There is no contemplative *life*, only intermittent occurrences of contemplation to be found in poetry. In the context of Oakeshott's later work, this means that, unlike an agent in self-enactment, an author of a 'Waste Land' is under no obligation to imagine a 'Little Gidding' later. The aesthetization of self-enactment threatens agent's integrity in time. The performance of one's character throughout one's life is the performance of all performances.[7] This, as in the case of 'religious' self-enactment, returns 'poetic' self-enactment to self-disclosure, but also to the pastness of practices.

This pastness is a counterpart to the possibility implied in self-enactment, that of slipping into a mode of action described as fabrication and distinguished from performance insofar as in the fabrication imagined and wished-for outcomes are sought not in the responses of others but in the production of artefacts. Initially, Oakeshott reserves fabrication exclusively for art but later introduces another option: extraction of substantive outcomes by force, in which case others are no longer understood as intelligent goings-on. This invokes the ancient *tekhnē-phronesis-poiēsis* constellation and accepts the identification of *poiēsis* with *tekhnē*, as long as *poiēsis* is an irrelevant instance of poetry; that is, poetry misplaced into the realm of doing. A misplacement which is an ever-present possibility in self-enactment, when an agent is always on the verge of suspending his participation in the realm of reciprocal performances and thus in human conduct itself, either fabricating himself or attempting to balance this inclination by fabricating others besides himself in treating them as past performers. This is why the oft-cited 'shadow-line' passage from *Rationalism* has to be taken with caution precisely because it links political conservatism with the necessity of accepting the world of others besides ourselves as a 'solid world of things'.

If, in his later work, Oakeshott pauses over this shadow line, marked with such activities as excuse, it is because the basic structure of practice, as disclosed in *Experience*, remains intact but does not constitute the whole of human conduct. With the introduction of rules and practices, humans turn out to spend much more time in the past than was the case in Oakeshott's first book, in which he was mostly concerned with criticizing various theoretical attempts at throwing 'existence' into the future. Now, if the pastness of human conduct as a whole is one of its

ineliminable conditions, the question is not what to do about it, but how to understand it on its own terms. Oakeshott's account of substantive performance, which concludes the first essay of *On Human Conduct*, is his answer to this question: 'historically'. His discussion in *On History* makes it clear that to understand substantive performance is to understand, not *a* practical action, but a distinct identity, *eventum*. Viewed historically, substantive performances cannot be understood in terms of 'personalities'.

Thus, because a change in identity on the level of doing entails a change in the idiom of inquiry, history takes over from ethics on the level of understanding. The shift is categorial and cannot itself be accounted for theoretically. Whether it remains a matter of practical choice, and thus remains in the grip of practice, is a question for philosophy to answer. In *On Human Conduct*, Oakeshott practises such shifts without providing any detailed account of them. What matters, however, is that such shifts are possible. What makes them possible is that *eventum*, as a conclusion of a historical inquiry, meets the requirements of a world of others besides ourselves to be found beyond the shadow line of Oakeshott's earlier account, but it is no longer 'a solid world of things'. What has just been on the verge of fabrication, is ready to be returned into the realm of performance. This taking over which is continuously going on in moral practices between history and practice as modes of experience is what I call tradition.

Civilization

How practice takes over from history is, in a sense, the story of the second essay of *On Human Conduct* where the focus of attention shifts from life to law. Deliberately enacted laws transform informal moral practice into the practice of civility. The manifold character of *lex* echoes that of the language of morality: *lex* is both enacted (by legislators and adjudicators) and disclosed to *cives* by rulers. Since *lex*, in its entirety, specifies nothing but relations among *cives*, relates *homines* to each other as *cives*, it is impossible to subscribe to its conditions without entering into the web of these relations. Precisely for this reason it must identify its own jurisdiction. This identification originates not in legal deliberations but in the struggles for recognition between human associations.

Such identification of the jurisdiction of *lex* endows *cives* with the identity of 'subjects', specifying not their standing vis-à-vis *lex* as a whole but their relation to rulers, and in this distinct capacity *cives* are not directly related to each other. In defining this relationship,

Oakeshott is primarily concerned with distinguishing it from all sorts of servitude. However, it remains problematic in another respect. In ruling, *lex* is always a past *lex*, already enacted by legislators and not yet re-enacted, by relating it to specific situations, through adjudication. In this respect, it is always taken as given. Were this the whole of *lex*, Oakeshott would have little trouble repeating what he wrote in *Experience*: 'Law is the enemy of moral life', and its homogeneity, 'as of every abstract world of experience, is the homogeneity of death'.

Some believed that *respublica* could be enlivened by returning it to the struggles in which it was first identified. Although Oakeshott's conclusion is different, he recognizes that it was war, preparations for war or memories of war that most decisively imposed upon the modern European state the ambiguous character of a *societas cum universitas*. Therefore, his account of *respublica*, as a structure of governance, incorporates this tension, while his characterization of politics, now distinguished from governance, conditionally resolves it. Theoretically, this involves an interplay, but not an overlap, of history and practice and thus corresponds to what Oakeshott described, in a letter to Popper, as the politics of conversation: 'I do not believe either that reason is capable of excluding violence (even in the long run) or that, because reason can't, nothing can. I think I know of a "method" of politics which is not either truly or falsely Rationalist but which is the opponent of violence.'[8] The politics of conversation is nothing as straightforward as a polite exchange between homogeneously practical (or historical) individuals, it is an adventure of *cives* recognized in their *intrinsic* heterogeneity, since each of them can imagine his current, past or future situation differently: historically, practically or scientifically.

How does this apply to the interplay of *societas* and *universitas*? Oakeshott's own metaphor for *universitas* is presented in *On History* as the construction of the Tower of Babel. A parable for *societas cum universitas* which Oakeshott could well accept can be found in Kafka's 'The Great Wall of China'. The building of the wall (the identification of the jurisdiction of *lex*) has little to do with expediency or prudence, its meaning consists in laying down a foundation for a Tower of Babel which humans would be allowed to erect provided they do not ascend to it (the moving up of the scale of authorizations as a reconciliation to nothingness). In this mode of association, subjects, 'the empire's final support', do not experience the presence of their remote rulers and effectively govern themselves by custom, but cannot subscribe to the conditions of their contingent association, for these are continuously slipping into the past. So, 'like tardy arrivals, like strangers in a city, they stand at the

end of some densely thronged side-street peacefully munching the food they have brought with them, while far away in front, in the Market Square at the heart of the city, the execution of their ruler is proceeding'.[9]

In his analysis of Hobbes, Oakeshott argues that such a subject, a reasonable man, assured of his security by customs or by the territorial borders of the commonwealth guarded by the rulers, will make an associate incapable of generating a *civitas*. This specific activity, as Oakeshott finds it in Hobbes, requires a character less commonplace, whose self-understanding is shaped by the tension between pride and fear, springing from man's outmost desire to outgo the one before:

> Fear, here, is not merely being anxious lest the next pleasure escapes him, but dread of falling behind in the race and thus being denied felicity. And every such dread is a reflection of the ultimate fear, the fear of death. But, whereas animals may fear anything which provokes aversion, with men the chief fear (before which all others are of little account) is fear of the other competitors in the race. And whereas with animals the ultimate dread is death in any manner, the ultimate fear in man is the dread of violent (or untimely) death at the hand of another man; for this is dishonour, the emblem of all human failure. This is the fear which Hobbes said is the human passion 'to be reckoned with': its spring is not a mere desire to remain alive in adverse circumstances, nor is it a mere aversion from death, least of all from the pain of death; its spring is aversion from shameful death. (HCA 87–8)

This 'natural' race is 'civilized' in a *civitas*, not least because it is reasonable to hold to the contracts supported by the power and authority of the Sovereign. This, however, cannot explain how a *civitas* may come into being in the first place. To enjoy the assurance of peace offered by a commonwealth there has to be a 'first performer', ready to enter into the covenant of mutual trust when this very trust is manifestly absent. Oakeshott's conclusion is that the only characteristic of the Hobbesian man which could possibly enable him to do so is not reason but that very pride which all subsequent contracts are meant to quell: 'I must suspect that this account is evidently faulty or incomplete. To what extent the supposition that of a man (such as Hobbes understood Sidney Godolphin to have been) careless of the consequences of being bilked as the first performer of this covenant, a man of "pride" and not of "reason," supplies what is lacking, the reader must decide for himself' (140).

As so often with Oakeshott, this statement is best understood once taken literally. He is not merely submitting his argument for theoretical

refutation but restating theoretically the main postulate of his account of practice: any reconciliation between 'is' and 'ought' is possible only in the form of individual action. Hobbes' theory is 'faulty' only insofar as it is read as supplying a theoretical answer to the question that cannot possibly be decided upon theoretically. It is 'incomplete' insofar as it is read only by 'a few professional readers, who themselves (as like as not) understand it only professionally', whereas *Leviathan* is also 'a work of art in the proper sense, one of the masterpieces of the literature of our language and civilization' (159). This does not mean that the poetic quality of Hobbes' text supplies what his theoretical argument cannot. It 'simply' points at the inherent limitation of any *argument*. No isolated 'profession', be it a moralist, a literary critic or an historian, can possibly account for the whole of human life, because life is not modelled on any of the modes of experience within which arguments are appropriate. Similarly, no *civitas*, no matter how secured externally or internally, so as to keep barbarism at bay, can possibly 'civilize' all moral ideas, such as 'pride', without any remainder. This uncivilized remainder is not barbarism. In fact, it is on this very remainder that civilization depends.

Since *civitas* may be defended only if someone makes a choice to do so, as Godolphin did, what has to be shown is how an already established association shaped by the practice of civility, *respublica*, and always on the verge of being thrown into the past by the activity of ruling, may be returned into the realm of practical performance again. To paraphrase Oakeshott, a start must be made somewhere, and it must be shown to be a *conversational* beginning (cf.: HCA 139); a beginning which 'as long as it dwells among men saves all things'.[10]

In the end, everyone must decide for himself whether *civitas* is to be found, and has to be defended, at the territorial borders identified by the rulers of a *respublica* or at any point, including that 'at the heart of the city', where the conflation of *lex*, as an abstract homogeneous world of ideas, with life in its irreducible heterogeneity is attempted. Given what has been said about the interplay of practice and history in the first essay of *On Human Conduct*, it is not difficult to see how this choice is understood in the second. The overall conditions of *respublica*, which rulers are inclined to attend to in the idiom of fabrication, are continuously returned into the realm of performance through politics in a manner similar to that in which substantive performances are assembled historically into *eventum*. Politics involves imagining a substantive want (a *respublica* to be) and then deliberation and persuasion. As a form of reflection, political deliberation is akin to self-enactment and its criterion is authenticity in subscription to a *superbum* (in Hobbes) and not to any

of the more commonplace moral practices, including that of civility. What returns politics towards civility (and practice as a mode of understanding) is persuasion. What returns it into the idiom of history (but no longer the practical past of ruling) is that *civitas* itself, if its meaning is to be that of a 'dry wall' of individual occurrences in touch with each other, cannot possibly be understood, or imagined in political deliberation, as an outcome of an assignable decision.

Thus, as far as Oakeshott's historical account of *societas* and *universitas* in the third essay of *On Human Conduct* is concerned, it may well be true that his 'own efforts … lacked the virtue for which he praised Shakespeare long ago, of creating characters who can stand alone and villains who "do not inevitably depend for their *raison d'être* upon … heroes" '.[11] In the second essay, however, a much more balanced conversation is conducted across a shadow line by two characters: a proud 'political animal' and the 'unprofessional guardians' of the vernacular of civil intercourse. This conversation may be read as Oakeshott's answer to the question raised in *Rationalism*, whether it is possible 'to be conservative in respect of government and radical in respect of almost any other activity'. This question, in turn, arises out of his earlier puzzlement over 'that love of moderation which has as frequently been fatal to English philosophy as it has been favourable to English politics'. In the end, Oakeshott follows a Hobbes who 'with a sure and steady irony, does what … the literature of Existentialism is doing today with an exaggerated display of emotion and a false suggestion of novelty' (HCA 163).

Politics, unlike in Hegel and Schmitt, for example, is an inward-oriented activity unfolding not only at the territorial borders of a given *societas* but also at a shadow line separating practice from history, *lex* from life. At this shadow line, the inwardness of politics and the locality of a given *societas* are transfigured, acquiring characteristics more appropriate for what may be described as world society. This is so because of the character of the excess without which politics, as well as the conversation of *mankind*, would be impossible.

Poetry

First thing to note here is that Oakeshott, as far as I can see, does not follow Hobbes in allotting to 'pride' or 'honour' any special position in his own account of either civility or politics. If the counterpart of 'shame' in Hobbes is 'dishonour', in Oakeshott it is 'excuse'. This is so not only because, once 'honour' or 'virtue' become the public concern

in a human association, the very terms of association, as it happened with Montesquieu and with some of the contemporary neoconservatives, are transformed into those of an enterprise. The main reason is that Hobbesian 'honour' is tied conceptually to the ultimate measure of death. Pride also becomes authentic through this ultimate connection. In Oakeshott, the engagements of self-enactment, in which authenticity is sought, are always bound to return towards the practices of self-disclosure, and excuse marks the shadow line at which the languages of self-enactment and self-disclosure touch. What is the significance of this line and of the experiences associated with it?

Drawing on Oakeshott's notes on *Being and Time*, Luke O'Sullivan argues that, while Oakeshott's own understanding of the 'long littleness of life' is similar to Heidegger's *Angst*, he nevertheless pursues what Heidegger deliberately sets aside: the neo-Kantian inquiry into the character of historical knowledge, possible 'only when we bracket off our own Dasein'.[12] Stated this way, the disagreement appears as epistemological. For both Oakeshott and Heidegger, however, the question is ontological (modal), although they approach it differently.

For Heidegger the problem with what he, following Nietzsche, described as 'antiquarian' historiography lay in its forgetfulness of ontology for the sake of epistemology. The 'monumental' awareness of the openness of Being was lost in the antiquarian engagements with the past, which threw Dasein back into the deadliness of day-to-day doing, and could be regained only through the anticipatory resoluteness of Dasein's 'critical' choice of its 'hero', its being-free for death: 'for it is resoluteness that one first chooses the choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyalty following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated'.[13]

The way Oakeshott's argument unfolds in the languages of history and practice throughout *On Human Conduct*, it is invariably mindful of the fact that, whatever the modal conditions of a theoretical engagement, it invariably emerges in a choice to undertake this inquiry rather than that. In conversation, such choices are made continuously, whereas one's choice to make choices – one's choice to converse – is not practical, if it is a choice at all, since, here, as in life generally, Oakeshott assigns priority not to the considerations of practice but to delight.

Oakeshott's stress on the priority of delight in doing and poetry in contemplation (not understanding) is akin to Heidegger's 'monumental' awakening, without which the claims of practice might not be questioned, let alone refuted. Oakeshott never abandons this insistence on the necessity of some criterion of experience, but to say that he holds the view of the totality of experience as 'the imagined end of an endless

dialectics of discrepancy and reconciliation', while rejecting Hegel's ideal of 'a completely critical and therefore unconditional understanding' at the same time, is to saddle him with the bad infinity of thinking what, according to thought, cannot be known.[14] Oakeshott clearly agrees with Hegel that no criterion would be available to thought unless there existed in the world some actual experience of it. The 'endless dialectics of discrepancy and reconciliation' would have no meaning unless there existed, not an imagined end, but an actual experience of unity. Friendship and love in doing and poetry in contemplation come closest to offering just this, but not on their own.

One peculiarity of Oakeshott's account of poetry is that, whereas all universes of discourse possess languages and appear as voices only to each other, poetry is everywhere a voice. The gift of language is also a threat of inauthentic performance, the discrepancy between what is said and how it is said, a discrepancy which may lead either to barbarism, when one mode of speaking is believed to be appropriate for all universes of discourse, or dogmatism, when a conclusion reached within one universe of discourse is believed to be true for all of them. With poetry, this threat is removed but only because there is no settled language of poetry. This distinguishes poetry from *all* modes of experience.

However, it is not the barbarous voice that Aristotle opposed to the language of man as a political being. Oakeshott's interest in poetry as a voice may be read as an attempt to think the transformation of the 'unsought "freedom" of conduct from a postulate into an experience' (OHC 236). This attempt is clearly opposed to the understanding of personal autonomy 'construed (by Rousseau and others) as a hypothetical organic feeling of self-identity, dissipated in reflective consciousness and unable to survive in conduct *inter homines*', so that human conduct itself 'is, in consequence, declared to be necessarily inauthentic' (238). If no organic, divine, historical, practical or scientific totality of experience can be presupposed (and this is what the metaphor of the conversation of mankind stands for), then authenticity itself should be understood differently, without confusing it with, or opposing to, a competent performance in any of the existing languages-modes.

One possible route towards such understanding of authenticity may be traced through Hegel's writings on aesthetics. At least, this is what Jean-Luc Nancy does in a manner reminiscent of Oakeshott's. Poetry, in this account, as the essence of art, stands in a complex relationship to the plurality of arts, religion and philosophy. To put the dense story briefly, in the movement of the dialectical spiral there is a non-mediated remainder, 'the act of "friendly" fate, that is, of a fate that did not let

what was surpassed pass away without also gathering up from it the element or the aspect of it that we still "enjoy", by which we now properly take joy in this sensuous beauty as such'.[15] The whole of Nancy's own work revolves around this notion of 'sense', beginning with the Nietzschean/Heideggerian declaration of the loss of the sense of the world, that is, the loss of any sense of *cosmos* and therefore *polis*. However, in Nancy, the withdrawal of Sense, or the Idea, rather than shattering the world against Nothing, 'as abyss of the Idea (as the void at the heart of its self-imitation)', might as well bear witness to the renewed sense of the world, insofar as there remains an 'almost nothing' of co-existence as the most fundamental ontology, and 'that what *remains* is also what *resists* the most'.[16]

Specific position of poetry is due to this kind of resistance. Poetry is neither the Idea, nor the veil concealing the void left open on the Idea's withdrawal; nor is it a way of *imagining*: 'If there is no invisible, there is no visible image of the invisible. With the withdrawal of the Idea, … the image also withdraws. And … the other of the image is the vestige'.[17] Nancy's analysis of the vestige echoes Oakeshott's description of practices. The vestige is a trace which shows that someone has passed but does not invite questions about the identity of the passer-by: '*vestigare*, "to follow on the traces," a word of unknown origin, one whose trace has been lost. It is not a "quest"; it is simply the act of putting one's steps in the traces of steps'; 'the vestige bears witness to a step, a walk, a dance, or a leap, to a succession, an élan, a repercussion, a coming-and-going, a *transire*. It is not a ruin, which is the eroded remains of the presence; it is just a touch right on the ground'.[18] And if man 'is *imago* inasmuch as he is *rationalis*, … the *vestigium* is sensible'.[19] The very vestigial tracing of the withdrawal of the Idea transforms the end (of art) into a new beginning. The vestige *makes* sense.

Because the vestige does not identify that which has left the trace, it does not belong to anyone, the way a pause in a conversation is not uttered by anyone but belongs to the rhythm of the conversation and thus belongs to anyone whatever:

– What you are describing, then, is 'dialogue', the quintessence of good intentions, so-called 'openness', 'mutual enrichment': the lowest form of spectacle.
– You are not wrong. But I am talking about something else. Dialogue is the rhythmic interruption of the logos, the space between the replies, each reply apart from itself retaining for itself an access to sense that is only its own, an access of sense that is only itself

– But that belongs to none
– Yes. And to all.[20]

Thus the vestige is the vestige of humankind: 'Not of the man-image, not of the man subject to the law of being the image of his own Idea, or of the Idea of his "own-ness". … But let us say, let us try to say, no more than as an essay, *the passerby*. A passerby, each time, and each time anyone whatsoever – not that the passerby is anonymous, but his or her vestige does not identify him or her. Each time than also *common*'.[21]

Read this way, poetry is neither the substitute for the ideal of the totality of experience nor a fulfilment of any of the existing universes of discourse. It is an escape which is no longer a distraction from distraction by distraction, but 'something commensurate with the dignity of an immortal soul'.[22] It remains a voice because it is not captured in any of the existing languages. And at the same time, it is nothing but language, only language devoid of its symbolic pretensions to point beyond itself. Put differently, poetry is a trace of human conversability, conversability as such. It is an experience which, insofar as it is in excess of existing modes, may be described as non-modified, which also makes it analogous to that uncivilized excess of moral conduct that remains a voice as long as its utterance is not yet made comprehensible in the current language of civility.

However, the latter analogy is problematic, as the intervention of the practical 'not yet' indicates. Poetry, in Oakeshott, is not without the condition of possibility of its own. In 'The Voice of Poetry', it is presented as a lethargic distraction from practice. In *On History*, Oakeshott offers a more radical image of a 'pathological condition, called *apraxia*, in which a subject is still able to identify an object … as a concretion of qualities, but has lost all sense of the purpose for which it might be used or for which it was designed and is, thus, incapable of recognizing it as an object of practical concern, and yet does not replace it in his perception with an object of any other sort – an object of worship, of love or of poetic contemplation' (OH 13). Whatever the accuracy of Oakeshott's description of a specific clinical condition, he is again looking for an actually existing experience which, in a sense, also answers the question, whether there may be experience that is not modified at all.

The condition of *apraxia* is certainly not a mode of experience on Oakeshott's definition of modes as homogeneous worlds of ideas. Inasmuch as they appear as voices, both poetry and *apraxia* are categorially distinct from all the universes of discourse. At the same time, whereas poetic utterance is singular and universal, *apraxia* is marked with radical

diversity and bounded, as it were, by the existing universes of discourse, without belonging to any of them, and thus standing closer to the Aristotelian 'voice' as the opposite of man's political being.

What, then, is the exact character of the threefold relationship between poetry, *apraxia* and the universes of discourse which, even once taken together, fail to compose a true world of their own? What is its significance for politics? More precisely, what is the meaning of Oakeshott's insistence on a certain autonomy of poetry and politics?

Politics

In the voice/language distinction, as it is expressed in the relationship between *apraxia* and the universes of discourse, the significance of the voice, distinguished not merely from this or that language but from language as such, may be established through the similarity between the formal characters of language and *lex*. The latter demands that the validation of its authority results in yet another instance of *lex* but, to use Oakeshott's expression, invariably requires some 'negative' addition. To put it differently: 'Almost all the categories that we use in moral and religious judgements are in some way contaminated by law: guilt, responsibility, innocence, judgement, pardon. … And yet ethics, politics and religion have been able to define themselves only by seizing terrain from juridical responsibility – not in order to assume another kind of responsibility, but to articulate zones of non-responsibility'.[23]

One such terrain, on which politics and religion attempted to part their ways more resolutely than ever before, was codified in the settlement of Westphalia as the realm of the exceptional sovereign right to enact law within a given territory. Schmitt, stressing the (broken) link between theology and politics, identified modern sovereignty with the decision on exception further translated into the idea of the political grounded in the friend/enemy distinction. The withdrawal of theology left open that very abyss into which statesmen, having taken upon themselves the task of imitating the divinity in their particular, arbitrarily delineated realms, had to stare in their tragic encounters with the political.

What if, however, the structure of the political is more fundamental than the chancy plurality of states, while sovereign exception affects human life in a more profound way than war does? What if the political is related not to the tragic-heroic encounters with death but to the Aristotelian distinction within life itself; that is, distinction between life which is good, political, blessed with the gift of language, and life which

is not worthy of living, in which, as with the beasts and the barbarians, there is only voice and no language?

The latter distinction is not a given natural boundary but is drawn and re-drawn through the technological intrusion of ruling into the spheres of life previously inaccessible for the office of government, intrusion which may well take place in civil association. Thus, in his discussion of political deliberation, Oakeshott examines the consideration that 'civil prescription is undesirable if it be incapable of enforcement' and states, contra Bentham, that there are no inherently unenforceable laws, only prescriptions whose undesirability consists in that they prescribe what is undetectable 'without a great and arguably undesirable extension of the apparatus of detection' (OHC 179). The current debates on euthanasia, for example, demonstrate that it is not the desirability but the technological sophistication of the apparatus of detection, be it the detection of the 'true' intentions of the agents involved or that of the actual clinical condition of the patient, that stands in the way of transforming euthanasia into an enforceable rule.[24]

Giorgio Agamben defines this situation as the 'politicization' of death, so that death can no longer be posited as the ultimate human experience. Technology-driven policy seized almost every possible terrain available to ethics. The dramatic extension of the modern government's tether resulted in a situation in which it is no longer possible to imagine even a dim reflection of the subject who, according to Oakeshott, once put this process into motion: 'He is more likely to perish in some quixotic adventure than to die in bed; but, either way, he will have a death of his own as he has a life of his own' (OHC 237–8). By the same token, law and life become almost indistinguishable, while the heroic decision on exception turns into a technical rule, the day-to-day production of a pathological condition, similar to Oakeshottian *apraxia*, which Agamben defines as 'bare life', not yet death but no longer human life either.[25]

Now, this very zone of indistinction becomes the terrain which ethics has to reclaim to itself through the activity of 'bearing witness'. To bear witness is to regain subjectivity by testifying to the possibility of desubjectification now expressed not in the ultimate impossibility of being (death) as the condition of possibility for being-free but in the form of bare life (in a sense, Agamben's analogue of Nancy's 'almost nothing'). To testify is to speak solely in the name of an incapacity to speak, so that testimony 'thus guarantees not the factual truth of the statement safeguarded in the archive, but rather its unacrhivability, its exteriority with

respect to the archive – that is, the necessity by which, as the existence of language, it escapes both memory and forgetting'.[26]

This, I think, is the structure of experience in Oakeshott's later argument. Isolated modes of experience, each purporting to represent experience in its totality as a homogeneous world of ides, each with its own structure of truth, fact, subject, produce not the 'intermodal warfare', described by Collingwood in *Speculum Mentis*, but the state of *apraxia* as a possibility of the impossibility of speech and thus complete desubjectification. However, this very state of *apraxia* operates also as the condition of possibility for poetry which, without belonging to any of the universes of discourse, represents conversability as such, that is, the possibility of language, human individuality and human life as a whole, not limited to the considerations of practice or any other mode of experience. And this is what Agamben, in a manner similar to Nancy's, describes as the activity of being a 'remnant'.

To 'remain' is to redeem 'the very whole whose division and loss' is signified in the possibility of separating the human from the inhuman, voice from language, but to do so without presupposing any teleological progression from the inhuman to the human, from voice to language, in which they would be 'joined in an established, completed humanity and reconciled in a realized identity', through an understanding of personal autonomy, rejected by Oakeshott, as a hypothetical organic feeling of self-identity: 'There is no foundation in or beneath them; rather, at their center lies an irreducible disjunction in which each term, stepping forth in the place of a remnant, can bear witness. What is truly historical is not what redeems time in the direction of the future or even the past; it is rather, what fulfils time in the excess of a medium. The messianic Kingdom is neither in the future (the millennium) nor in the past (the golden age): it is, instead, a *remaining time*'.[27]

This is what 'practical' and 'historic' individuals are doing in civil association – stepping forth in the place of a shadow line separating the worlds of history and practice, law and life, speaking the language of civil intercourse as it should be spoken:

> to bear witness is to place oneself in one's own language in the position of those who have lost it, to establish oneself in a living language as if it were dead, or in a dead language as if it were living – in any case, outside both the archive and the *corpus* of what has already been said. It is not surprising that the witness' gesture is also that of the poet, the *auctor* par excellence, Hölderlin's statement that 'what remains is what the poets found' (*Was bleibt, stiften die Dichter*) is not to be understood

> in the trivial sense that poets' works are things that last and remain throughout time. Rather, it means that the poetic word is the one that is always situated in the position of a remnant and that can, therefore, bear witness. Poets – witnesses – found language as what remains, as what actually survives the possibility, or impossibility, of speaking.[28]

This movement is not evidently present in Oakeshott's account of the civil condition because of the sharp separation between *societas* and *universitas*. Although meant mainly to elucidate the idea of civil association, clearly distinct both from the various attempts at re-galvanizing the ancient *polis* and at attributing the character of civil association to the actually existing states, it conceals the extent to which *societas* owes its sphere of jurisdiction to the operation of *universitas*. Consequently, it obscures the effect of ruling on the structures of *respublica* and, more importantly, the counter-task of politics, as an activity of transforming *respublica* into a concrete *civitas*. Inasmuch as *civitas* is enacted politically, it can be thought, regardless of its territorial location (for the location of a trace is as irrelevant as its authorship, what matters is the going-on, the taking-place, not the taking of places), as being universal. Not, of course, as a vestigial survival of some primordial universal mankind, but as that trace of humanity as a remnant which escapes any particularization, including civilization, and at the same time makes civility possible. In this sense, Oakeshottian politics is an answer to the following question (or challenge) posed by Nancy: 'And can one avoid making of *res publica* the "thing", the identificatory substance of a community? Our entire history seems to answer that this is not possible'.[29]

Now, precisely for this reason, Oakeshottian account of politics has to be supplemented with that of world politics, while world politics has to be distinguished from the political. Inasmuch as the political describes the withdrawal of *cosmos* and, consequently, *polis*, it abandons politics as an activity allegedly appropriate only for an actually existing *polis*. However, it presupposes not only a new link between some other fundamental ontology and the community the political is supposed to bring about, but also the fundamentally political structure of human experience as such. Since the absolute presupposition of Oakeshottian experience is conversation conducted in a variety of languages which, however, do not float against each other in a totally criterionless fashion, the fundamental structure of this experience is 'poetic', where poetry refers not to art but to human conversability as such.

As long as poetry is related to the condition of discursive indistinction, *apraxia*, Oakeshott has little trouble reminding Morgenthau that life is

not 'tragic', and politics is even less so. What art sees by looking into the abyss of *apraxia* may well be 'tragedy', but there is more to life than art. At the same time, no 'heroic' statesman, no theorist committed to a given idiom of inquiry, can stare into this abyss on behalf of an association or a discipline. It is a threshold at which one either passes out, as it were, ('not with waving of flags or the noise of machine-guns in the streets', as Collingwood knew, 'but in the dark, in the stillness, when no one is aware of it'), or passes by, by way of translation from one order of modal conditions into another.

As a result, politics (and world politics) takes place only in relation to deliberately enacted laws, while practices shaped by these laws are understood by way of the conversation between history and practice. From a somewhat different perspective, where the basic presupposition about Being is the anarchic historicity itself, Agamben arrives at a view of the post-1989 world which is not that different:

> the battlefield is divided today in the following way: on one side, there are those who think the end of history without the end of the state (that is, the post-Kojèvian or postmodern theorists of the fulfillment of the historical process of humanity in a homogeneous universal state); on the other side, there are those who think the end of the state without the end of history (that is, progressivists of all sorts). Neither position is equal to its task because to think the extinction of the state without the fulfillment of the historical telos is as impossible as to think a fulfillment of history in which the empty form of state sovereignty would continue to exist. … Only a thought capable of thinking the end of the state and the end of history at one and the same time, and of mobilizing one against the other, is equal to [the] task.[30]

If this means mobilizing against each other a no-longer-teleological view of history and a view of the state which is no longer the enforcer of the empty form of law, then this is what Oakeshott does with the activity of politics, where practice is put into conversation with history. In every such conversation there is an excess, an untranslatable (or 'uncivilized') remainder which, in the case of the on-going to and fro translation between the languages of practice and history, is world society inasmuch as it is the excess of human conduct in the steadily globalizing adventure of civilization.

Now, the reason I call this conversation between history and practice 'tradition', thus moving, as it were, against the current of Oakeshott's

argument, is not merely because the word 'society' is out of tune with the uncivilized remainder of human conduct it is meant to refer to in this context, but also because this view of world society answers International Relations traditionalists' concerns with the availability of tradition in both conduct and understanding. This return to the traditionalist concerns require a brief final remark.

8
Epilogue

The pertinence of the opposition, which exists in our understanding, between 'modernity' and 'tradition' is what, I believe, forced Oakeshott to substitute 'practices' for 'traditions' on the way from *Rationalism in Politics* to *On Human Conduct*. Having repeated Collingwood's resort to 'tradition' as a check against some of the effects of modernity in the former book, Oakeshott then attempted to demonstrate how 'practices' may be shown to be operating within the condition of modernity. In this sense, they are the remainder of the human condition which not merely escapes the numerous divisions imposed by modernity but redeems the overall division and loss without invoking any straightforwardly 'conservative' attitudes. Especially so in the case of the activity of politics, in which the complex structure of 'practices', inviting at least two different idioms of inquiry at once, requires the distinctively modern ability to move amidst the categorially distinct universes of discourse.

To call these practices 'traditions' again is meaningful only in relation to the specific context of International Relations, where the limited value of this move would consist in the attempt to underscore a certain continuity in the development of this field of study. However, what is the point of insisting on this continuity? Is it a case of drawing yet another boundary and, what is worse, the one which is irrelevant for the understanding of world politics, let alone for political activity itself?

'The most striking feature of international thought in the twentieth century is not so much any innovation in content', it has been argued recently, 'but rather the change in intellectual context marked by the arrival of "International Relations" … as a discrete field of academic study, perhaps even an academic discipline'.[1] What was involved in this institutionalization? For Oakeshott, the upsurge of interest in politics in the universities meant, first and foremost, that those interested in the

understanding of this activity in terms of its postulates acquired not a new status or a new subject but a new home:

> It is long since academics began to take an interest in the activity of governing and the instruments of government, and among the circumstances which in England (and perhaps also in America) have, in recent times, promoted this sort of interest is the fact that many academics, seconded during two wars to government offices, have found there a virgin (but not unsuspected) world and have felt the impulse to explore it. … But if every don were to teach undergraduates what he himself is interested in, and if every professional chair were held to entail or to authorize a counterpart to itself in undergraduate education, there would be little in these days to distinguish a university from a mad house. (R 214, note 6)

The rules of the academic inquiry, like those of any other human activity, receive their meaning from their place in human experience more generally. Yet despite some familial resemblance with other human activities, 'political education' necessarily has distinctive characteristics of its own, derived, again, not so much from the character of its subject-matter but rather from that of the university as the place of teaching and learning:

> The characteristic gift of a university is the gift of an interval. Here is an opportunity to put aside the hot allegiances of youth without the necessity of at once acquiring new loyalties to take their place. Here is a break in the tyrannical course of irreparable events; a period in which to look round upon the world and upon oneself without the sense of an enemy at one's back or the insistent pressure of having to make up one's mind; a moment in which to taste the mystery without the necessity of at once seeking a solution. And all this … neither as a first step in education (for those wholly ignorant of how to behave or think) nor as a final education to fit a man for the day of judgement, but as a middle. (V 113–14)

Like poetry in the conversation of mankind, this interval 'is nothing so commonplace as a pause to get one's breath', it is not 'the cessation of activity, but the occasion of a unique kind of activity' (114). The uniqueness of the university consists not merely in the variety of voices in which its inhabitants speak about the world but also in that they do so while learning. If the state, according to Collingwood, is a political

unit *par excellence* insofar as it is the only unit the sole task of which is to establish and to maintain the order of human beings, then university, according to Oakeshott, is exemplary in its dedication to the sole task of learning how to participate in the conversation of mankind. This does not mean, of course, that it was designed for this purpose. Rather, it has gradually acquired this character, also acquiring a somewhat rickety shape:

> Do we need a map, it may be plausibly asked, a map on which the relations between the parts of the world of learning are clearly displayed? Would not the whole thing be better for a little glue to hold it together? And some who feel most strongly about this are to be found filling in the interstices between the sciences with a sticky mess called 'culture', in the belief that they are supplying a desperate need. But both the diagnosis and the remedy spring from a sad misconception. (109)

Nothing can save a university – or a discipline within it – which has fallen out of the magnetic field of the conversation, and no university or discipline can hope to re-enact a conversation by merely imitating the patterns it once enjoyed. What matters is not forestalling the alleged decay or constructing ideal situations but maintaining what is the source of the conversation's vitality; that is, the experience of human freedom rooted in human capacity for learning.

In other words, the relevance of the activity of politics and the understanding of politics for each other cannot be derived from their ability to inform or to support each other. And if there is a sense in which both may be seen as contributing to a single engagement, then this is the tiresome engagement of the conversation of mankind. The gift here is not a piece of valuable information, nor is it a solution of an urgent problem, but the experience of being 'kindled by the presence of the ideas of another order'. Thus, where science guards political discourse from unchecked ambiguity but makes it dangerously uniform, poetry, by bursting out all routine, 'preserves, for science itself, an idea of truth according to which what is manifested is not at our disposal, is not manipulable, but remains a surprise, a gift'.[2]

This, I think, is what was involved in the traditionalist disposition to bring together 'traditions and theories normally not able to relate to each other'. This is why to retain this disposition is as important as to expose a sloppy argument or to attack a hidden assumption. Recognizing this gift also requires a disposition to recognize that ideas of another order are not necessarily located beyond this or that boundary.

As Collingwood told his students:

> I would say to you, when you look for shelter behind institutions or leaders, don't look for help to things outside you. Look inside yourselves. … In a world where institutions have broken down and leaders have failed, this resource is still open to you; it is the resource men have always had in such times, and it has always been enough. If you can look deeply enough into yourselves, you will find there not only the means of living well in a disordered world, you will find, what you will never find elsewhere, the means of building a new world for your more fortunate children to inhabit. (EPP 174)

All in all, to study world politics in the university is not merely to work out solutions which others might later find useful for the betterment of mankind. It is not to defend human freedom against the encroachments of bureaucracy or 'politicians'. Nor is it a disinterested inquiry into the 'nature of things'. It is a unique way of practicing human freedom, valuable in itself and in virtue of this value capable of contributing to the conversation of mankind:

> Bureaucratized teaching and learning systems dominate the scene, but nevertheless it is everyone's task to find his free space. The task of our human life in general is to find free spaces and learn to move therein. In research this means finding the question, the genuine question. You all know that as a beginner one comes to find everything questionable, for that is the privilege of youth to seek everywhere the novel and new possibilities. One then learns slowly how a large amount must be excluded in order to finally arrive at the point where one finds the truly open questions and therefore the possibilities that exist. Perhaps the most noble side of the enduring independent position of the university – in political and social life – is that we with youth and they with us learn to discover the possibilities and thereby possible ways of shaping our own lives. There is this chain of generations which pass through an institution, like the university, in which teachers and students meet and lose one another. Students become teachers and from the activity of the teachers grows a new teaching, a living universe, which is certainly more than something known, more than something learnable, but a place where something happens to us. I think this small academic universe still remains one of the few precursors of the grand universe of humanity, of all human beings, who must learn to create with one another new solidarities.[3]

Notes

1 Prologue

1. Speech by T. Blair, Labour Party conference, Brighton, 2 October 2001. Accessed at http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labourconference2001/story/0,1220,561988,00.html, October 2003.
2. Cited in M. MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2001): 98.
3. Ibid.: 479.
4. Speech by Blair.
5. H. Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969): 67–8.
6. Ibid.: 68.
7. B. Crick, *In Defence Of Politics* (London: Continuum, 2000): 15–16, 20.
8. R. Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', in R. Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 206.
9. P. Ricoeur, 'The Task of Hermeneutics', in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991): 64.
10. Ricoeur, 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics', in *Text*: 37.
11. C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 22.
12. M. Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977): 135 and note 12 on page 153.
13. Ibid.: 135.
14. Schmitt, *Political*: 19–20. In contemporary International Relations, see M. Dillon, *Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought* (London : Routledge, 1996); R.B.J. Walker, 'International Relations and the Concept of the Political', in K. Booth and S. Smith (eds) *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995): 306–27.
15. Cf.: J. George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)introduction to International Relations* (Boulder: Lynn Reinner, 1994).
16. O. Wæver, 'International Society – Theoretical Promises Unfulfilled?', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1992, 27: 121.
17. H. Morgenthau, 'Hannah Arendt on Totalitarianism and Democracy', *Social Research*, 1977, 44: 131.
18. Cf.: A. Murray, *Reconstructing Realism: Between Power Politics and Cosmopolitan Ethics* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997); T. Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Macmillan, 1998).
19. The classic statement of the 'traditionalist' position, in this view, is Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: A. Knopf, 1973); the 'classical' questions are articulated in M. Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, B. Porter and G. Wight (eds) (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

20. See J. McCormick, 'Fear, Technology, and the State: Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and the Revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany', *Political Theory*, 1994, 22: 619–52; and Oakeshott's review of Strauss (HCA 141–58). For a detailed study of Oakeshott's writings on Hobbes, see I. Tregenza, *Michael Oakeshott on Hobbes* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003).
21. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Harcourt, 1976): ix.
22. The immediate reference here is to the 'neo-classical constructivism' of John Ruggie which develops the 'neo-medievalism' theme of Bull ('Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization*, 1993, 47: 139–74; Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 1977: 254–94). More generally, it concerns the pervasive 'second-best' character of the 'classical' conception of international society in its pluralist version (C. Brown, 'International Theory and International Society: The Viability of the Middle Way?' *Review of International Studies*, 1995, 21: 183–96) which, in my view, is only a reflection of the second-best character of the 'classical' present judged by comparison with a better past and, hopefully, a brighter future.
23. Arendt, *Totalitarianism*: viii.
24. S. Hoffmann, 'Notes on the Limits of "Realism" ', *Social Research*, 1981: 657–9.
25. Whereas, until recently, the study of Oakeshott's thought has been overbalanced in favour of his political philosophy, Collingwood's political thought has not received the attention it deserves. There are, however, important monographs which begin to fill in this gap. Cf.: D. Boucher, *The Social and Political Thought of R.G. Collingwood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); J. Connelly, *Metaphysics, Method and Politics: The Political Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2002). On the other hand, Oakeshott's philosophy of history is beginning to attract more attention.

2 Another Case for The Classical Approach

1. Cf.: R. Jones, 'The English School of International Relations: A Case for Closure?' *Review of International Studies* 1981, 1: 1–12; R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); D. Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
2. Bull, 'International Relations Theory: The Case for the Classical Approach', in K. Knorr and J.N. Rosenau (eds) *Contending Approaches to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969): 27.
3. George, *Discourses of Global Politics*: 42.
4. Walker, 'International Relations and the Concept of the Political': 311.
5. H. Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* (London: Epworth, 1953): 79–80.
6. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*: 22.
7. M. Wight, 'Why is there no International Theory?', in H. Butterfield and M. Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966): 17–34.
8. Wight, 'International Theory': 32.
9. E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939): 113.

10. H. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*vs. *Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946): 220.
11. Wight, 'International Theory': 33.
12. Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*: 118.
13. Because of the cross-referencing between the two approaches, as well as the similarities between their views of the historical, this-worldly experience, both are often presented as 'Augustinian realism'. Yet differences between them are significant and consist in the extent to which an explicitly religious faith, rather than any kind of ultrarational belief, is admitted into one's theoretical framework.
14. Butterfield, *Christianity*: 3.
15. Butterfield was perhaps the first theorist to articulate the central realist concept of 'security dilemma' in his *History and Human Relations* (London: Collins, 1951). Characteristically, his account of it is not 'systemic', as in John Herz's more famous presentation, but springs from human finiteness and pride. In *Christianity, Diplomacy and War*, Butterfield suggests (p. 51) that, in the case of the English civil war, the operation of security dilemma was interrupted through forgiveness, and this rupture is the real origin of the British political tradition; a view that would be hardly acceptable for either Carr or Morgenthau. 'Beyond tragedy' is borrowed from the title of Niebuhr's book *Beyond Tragedy: Essays on the Christian Interpretation of History* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1937), where he explicitly distances himself from St Augustine on the issue of the separation of the City of God from the City of Man.
16. Butterfield, *Christianity*: 8.
17. M. Kaplan, 'The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science in International Relations', in *Contending Approaches*: 60.
18. Butterfield, *Christianity*: 4.
19. Wæver, 'The Rise and Fall of the Interparadigm Debate', in S. Smith, K. Booth, and M. Zalewski (eds) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 165.
20. W.E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995): 1.
21. Dillon, *Politics of Security*: 1.
22. S. Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999): 2. There is some debate as to whether this excess testifies to the ongoing self-deconstruction of the subject, or whether it *is* the subject.
23. J. Edkins, *Poststructuralism & International Relations: Bringing the Political Back In* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999): 2.
24. Dillon, *Politics of Security*: 4.
25. I deliberately put together the arguments of EIM and 'The Voice of Poetry'. There are, however, attempts to set them against each other. Cf.: S. Gerencser, *The Skeptic's Oakeshott* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
26. Cf.: Boucher, 'Overlap and Autonomy: The Different Worlds of Collingwood and Oakeshott', *Storia, Antropologia e Scienze del Linguaggio*, 1989, 4: 69–89.
27. The gap between theory and practice is perhaps most strongly emphasized in P. Franco, *The Political Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

28. Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002): 31–2.
29. Connolly, *Pluralization*: 5–6.
30. Compare Collingwood: ' "This is plainly untrue." Scientific use of language, certainly. But how delicately emotive! One hears the lecturing voice, and sees the shape of the lecturer's fastidious Cambridge mouth as he speaks the words. One is reminded of a cat, shaking from its paw a drop of the water into which it has been unfortunately obliged to step' (PA 264). Few pages later, Collingwood contends that, ideally, a physicist as great as Archimedes, having heard the latter's Eureka, might have understood the whole theory of gravity, 'and burst from the crowd, shouting, "So have I!" ' (267).
31. This echoes Wight's hasty transition from the 'realities of life and death' to those of 'national existence and extinction', so that reflectivist critique of this particular traditionalist closure can be also applied to Heidegger's analysis. Such applications are numerous, but Simon Critchley's introductory discussion of Jean-Luc Nancy's 're-writing of *Being and Time*' is perhaps the most relevant one in this context; *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought* (London: Verso, 1999): 239–53.
32. Cf.: Boucher, 'Politics in a Different Mode: An Appreciation of Michael Oakeshott, 1901–90', *History of Political Thought*, 1991, 12: 717–28.
33. Franco, *The Political Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott*: 236.
34. L. O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003): 207–8.
35. R. Tseng, *The Sceptical Idealist: Michael Oakeshott as a Critic of the Enlightenment* (Thorverton: Imprint Academic, 2003): 205.
36. G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998): 51.
37. N. O'Sullivan, 'Power, Authority and Legitimacy: A Critique of Postmodern Political Thought', in his edited *Political Theory in Transition* (London: Routledge, 2000): 259. Here Noël O'Sullivan outlines an explicitly Oakeshottian position. Surprisingly, he presents it in opposition to that of Foucault, who, I believe, would have agreed with the cited passage. A statement by Agamben cited earlier draws on Foucault's analysis of biopolitics which, in Oakeshottian terms, is yet another form of enterprise association. Where Foucault does differ from Oakeshott is that he is even more pessimistic about the fortunes of *societas* and more interested in showing what makes *universitas* so appealing. Interestingly, Luke O'Sullivan informs his readers that Oakeshott, in his eighties, was making notes on *The History of Sexuality*.
38. See Roy Tseng discussion of the difference between the epistemological and modal 'deadliness' of the past; *The Sceptical Idealist*: 213–75.
39. In my reading of Oakeshott, I concentrate mostly on the argument of *On Human Conduct* in its relation to those of *Experience and Its Modes* and *On History*. In doing so, I do not trace in every detail the evolution of Oakeshott's account of human associations from *Rationalism in Politics* to *On Human Conduct*. For discussions that focus on this issue see A. Farr, *Sartre's Radicalism and Oakeshott's Conservatism: The Duplicity of Freedom*(London: Macmillan, 1998); R. Tseng,*The Sceptical Idealist*; E. Podoksik, *In Defence of Modernity: Vision and Philosophy in Michael Oakeshott* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003) and T. Nardin, *The Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott*

(University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). In particular, Tseng and Nardin both argue that 'traditions of action' of *Rationalism* become 'practices' in *On Human Conduct*. I agree with this point but concentrate not on the transition from one term to another but on the (inter)modal character of 'practices' as they appear in Oakeshott's later work.

3 Politics

1. This is how Oakeshott characterized politics in his introduction to *Leviathan* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946): lxiv. The line was dropped from later editions.
2. D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn rev. by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978): xvi.
3. R. Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 91.
4. T. Nardin, *Law, Morality* and *the Relations of States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 30–31.
5. F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1897).
6. In IH, Collingwood attributes this view to Oakeshott's EIM. It may seem strange that it appears in SM where, unlike in Oakeshott's first work, Collingwood argues that different kinds of experience succeed each other in an evolutionary progression. Yet, even in this early work, Collingwood clearly states that art, science or history are 'the forms of philosophical error, and in order to study this phenomenon we must look not at philosophy but art and the rest' (SM 252).
7. The exact timing of this reversal, and whether there was a reversal at all, is a matter of debate in Oakeshottian scholarship. At any rate, what is specific to OHC, is the withdrawal of 'practice' as a name for the mode of experience. Thus, in 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind', where the hierarchical view of experience is already rejected, 'practice' still stands, alongside 'science' and 'history', for a particular voice in the conversation. In OHC, Oakeshott explicitly refuses to use the expression 'practical understanding' where he would have used it previously, mainly because subscription to specific practices is required both in 'historical' and in 'scientific' understanding otherwise released from the considerations of 'practice' as it was presented in EIM (OHC 57, note 1). Some argue that what was 'practice' in EIM or 'The Voice of Poetry', becomes 'conduct' in OHC (Tseng, *The Sceptical Idealist*). Others, believe that 'conduct', although it stands for what used to be 'practice', is significantly different from the latter (E. Podoksik, *In Defence of Modernity*). I follow Luke O'Sullivan, Terry Nardin and Glenn Worthington ('Michael Oakeshott on Life: Waiting with Godot', *History of Political Thought*, 1995, 16: 105–19 and 'Michael Oakeshott and the City of God', *Political Theory*, 2000, 28: 377–98) who argue that 'human conduct' is not reducible to the considerations of 'practice'.
8. What follows is not the only possible reading though. For an overview of the various positions on this issue see W. Dray, *History as Re-Enactment: R.G. Collingwood's Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 44–52.
9. Of course, here Collingwood is mostly interested in the distinction between 'natural appetites' and thought, rather than that between intentional action

and practices. Therefore this passage may well be read as an affirmation of the importance of intentions for the historian. The difference, then, becomes that between intentions and motives, rather than between intentions and practices as in Oakeshott.

4 Poetry

1. Compare this to the radical deontological assertion of T.S. Eliot, for example: 'The last temptation is the greatest treason/To do the right deed for the wrong reason', in *Murder in the Cathedral* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965): 52.
2. In this passage from *Rationalism in Politics*, the later distinction between 'government' and 'politics' is not yet made.
3. Eliot, 'Four Quartets', in *Collected Poems: 1909–1962* (Faber & Faber, 1963): 192.

5 Civilization

1. Strictly speaking, *societas* and *universitas* are meaningful only as two modes of understanding of the modern European state to be found in the history of political thought and not in the discussion of the general postulates of the civil condition where the ideal characters of civil and enterprise associations are identified. However, the argument of this chapter is that exploring the categories of practice and history together is justified and does not involve *ignoratio elenchi* or overlap.
2. Although Collingwood uses the term 'community' in this context, I am using 'association' to distinguish this type of community not only from Collingwood's 'non-social community' or 'society' proper but also from the 'body politic', the state, within which the process of the transformation of 'community' into 'society' is 'politics'.
3. It is not my intention to discuss Oakeshott's philosophy of history in detail; nor is there a need for that. O'Sullivan and Nardin have recently provided excellent and interrelated accounts of it. What is of particular significance in this context is O'Sullivan's argument that discussions of historical understanding in OHC and OH form one seamless argument; *Oakeshott On History*: 219–47.
4. Here both 'practice' and 'politics' are used in their earlier meanings: the former as the mode of experience, the latter as an activity not wholly commendable.
5. Characteristically, Oakeshott uses this expression, 'historic practice', in the context of his discussion of political deliberation (OHC 177).
6. Butterfield, *Christianity*: 75, 79.
7. Ibid.: 79–80.
8. This is also how C.A.W. Manning presents diplomacy, as an activity 'logically pre-legal' and yet constitutive of all the practices of international society; *The Nature of International Society* (London: Macmillan, 1975): 132.
9. O'Sullivan offers an interesting analysis of Oakeshott's unpublished writings, in which he discussed Aristotle's ideas on change and identity and thought it necessary to translate the language of physics employed by Aristotle 'into the language of time – a translation Aristotle himself did not make. "Occurrences" must be substituted for "things" '; *Oakeshott On History*: 246.

10. When a civil court judges, somewhat misleadingly, that an agent ought to apologize, the court cannot expect him to do so because he is ashamed; he is merely found guilty, and 'apology' is believed to be the best possible recompense for the injury. What is at stake is a clear-cut transactional engagement and not a subscription to moral practice.

6 Tradition

1. Cf.: S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) and *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Yale University Press, 1968).
2. Cf.: A. Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992); H. Bull and A. Watson, (eds) *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); B. Buzan and R. Little, 'Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets History', *European Journal of International Relations*, 1996, 4: 403–38; J. Charvet, 'The Idea of an International Ethical Order', *Studies in Political Thought*, 1992, 1: 59–72. All these 'concentric' images of world order are conceptualized on the margins of the English School by J. Der Derian in his *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (London: Blackwell, 1987) and R. Epp, 'The English School on the Frontiers of International Society: A Hermeneutic Recollection', *Review of International Studies*, 1998, Special Issue: 47–63.
3. R. Cox, 'Thinking about civilizations', *Review of International Studies*, 2000: 217–34.
4. R. Lipschutz, 'Politics Among People: Global Civil Society Reconsidered', in H.H. Hobbs (ed.) *Pondering Postinternationalism: A Paradigm for the Twenty-First Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000): 94.
5. K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979): 80.
6. Cf.: J. Grieco, 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism', *International Organization*, 1988, 42: 485–507.
7. Cf.: R. Keohane, 'Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond' in his edn, *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
8. Cf.: A. Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 1992, 46: 391–425.
9. Nardin, *Law*: 3.
10. Ibid.: 5.
11. Jackson, *The Global Covenant*: 118.
12. Ibid.: 118.
13. Ibid.: 104.
14. Ruggie, 'Territoriality': 164–5.
15. Nardin, *Law*: 240–1, 223.
16. Ibid.: 241.
17. Ibid.: 243.
18. Nardin, *Law*: 43–44; Jackson, *Covenant*: 112.
19. O. O'Neill, 'Bounded and Cosmopolitan Justice', *Review of International Studies*, 2000, 26: 45–6.
20. J. Charvet, 'International Society from a Contractarian Perspective', in D. Mapel and T. Nardin (eds) *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 130.

21. J. Charvet, *The Idea of an Ethical Community* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995): 5–6. The Realism Charvet has in mind here is philosophical rather than political.
22. Ibid.: 119.
23. Ibid.: 118–20.
24. Ibid.: 122.
25. O'Neill, 'Cosmopolitan Justice': 51.
26. Ibid.: 46.
27. Charvet, *Ethical Community*: 185–6.
28. A. Linklater, 'Men and Citizens in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 1981, 7: 37.
29. O'Neill, 'Cosmopolitan Justice': 56; emphasis deleted.
30. Ibid.: 59.
31. Charvet, *Ethical Community*: 63–85.
32. Walker, 'The Political': 311.
33. Bull, *Anarchical Society*: 24–7; 'The Importance of Grotius in the Study of International Relations', in H. Bull, B. Kingsbury and A. Roberts (eds) *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', in *Diplomatic Investigations*.
34. E. Ringmar, 'On the Ontological Status of the State', *European Journal of International Relations*, 1996, 2: 448.
35. E. Ringmar, 'The relevance of international law: a Hegelian interpretation of a peculiar seventeenth-century preoccupation', *Review of International Studies*, 1995, 21: 97.
36. Ringmar, 'The State': 452.
37. R. Ashley, 'Political Realism and Human Interests', *International Studies Quarterly*, 1981, 2: 211.
38. Ibid.: 234.
39. R. Ashley, 'The poverty of neorealism', *International Organization*, 1984, 38: 225–61.
40. R. Ashley, 'The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a critical Social Theory of International Politics', *Alternatives*, 1987, XII: 429.
41. Ibid.: 406.
42. Ibid.: 408.
43. R. Ashley, 'Living on Border Lines: Man, Post-structuralism and War', in J. Der Derian and M. Shapiro (eds) *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (New York: Lexington, 1989): 309.
44. Ashley, 'The achievements of post-structuralism', in *Positivism and Beyond*: 240.
45. Ibid.: 250–1.
46. Ibid.: 252.
47. Ibid.: 253.
48. Ashley, 'Realism': 230.
49. Ashley, 'Post-structuralism': 253.
50. Ringmar, 'The State': 455.
51. Ashley, 'Post-structuralism': 252.
52. Ibid.: 253.
53. G. Santayana, 'The Philosophy of Travel', *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 1964, 40: 7–8.
54. C. Taylor, 'The hermeneutics of conflict', in J. Tully (ed.) *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988): 225–8.

55. Arendt, *On Violence*; see note 4 in the Prologue.
56. Ringmar, 'The State': 454 and 461, n. 15.
57. J. Shklar, 'Rethinking the Past', *Social Research*, 1977, 44: 80.
58. Wight, 'International Theory'.
59. Cf.: M. Donelan, 'Political Theorists and International Relations', in his *The Reason of States: A Study in International Political Theory* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978) and *Elements of International Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
60. H.-G. Gadamer, 'The Continuity of History and the Existential Moment', *Philosophy Today*, 1972, 16: 237.
61. Ibid.: 234–9.
62. For MacIntyre's argument see *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1985); *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988); *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (London: Duckworth, 1990).
63. A. MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues?* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999): 142. In this work, MacIntyre does not use the word 'tradition'. However, the one he does use, 'the network of giving and receiving', accords well both with the etymology of *traditio* and his earlier writings on 'tradition'.
64. Ibid.: 132–3.
65. Ibid.: 143.
66. Gadamer, 'Notes on Planning for the Future', *Dædalus*, 1966: 589.
67. Ibid.: 589.
68. Ibid.: 587.

7 Neotraditionalism in International Relations

1. H. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Europe After Napoleon* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973): 329.
2. Ibid.: 322.
3. H. Morgenthau, 'Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State', *Encounter*, November 1974: 61.
4. Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity*: 217–38.
5. Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute: Or Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2000): 160.
6. O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott On History*: 180.
7. The idea of 'character' is discussed by Oakeshott in relation to 'cultivation' and 'exploration' in his Harvard lectures (HL 29–43). Good discussions of its place in Oakeshott's context and his own thinking generally can be found in Podoksik, *In Defence of Modernity*: 141–53 and O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History*: 34–39.
8. Cited in O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History*: 134.
9. F. Kafka, *Complete Short Stories* (London: Vintage, 1999): 243.
10. Plato's remark from *Laws* cited by Arendt who, on that occasion, did not believe such beginnings to be alive in the Western political tradition; *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin Books, 1968): 18.
11. O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History*: 207–8.

12. Ibid.: 229–31.
13. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962): 437.
14. T. Nardin, *The Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott*: 6, 23.
15. J.-L. Nancy, 'The Girl Who Succeeds the Muses', in *The Muses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996): 46.
16. Nancy, 'The Vestige of Art', in *The Muses*: 94, 81.
17. Ibid.: 93, 97.
18. Ibid.: 95, 97.
19. Ibid.: 96.
20. Nancy, *The Sense of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993): 165.
21. Nancy, 'Art': 99.
22. O'Sullivan, *Oakeshott on History*: 163; cited from an unpublished paper.
23. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999): 18, 20–21.
24. Consider the following example. In 2004, Preston Crown Court released from custody one Bernard Heginbotham, aged 100, judging that slitting the throat of his 87-year old wife constituted an act of love and compassion. Save for the fact that 'love' does not belong to civil conduct and therefore cannot be decided by a civil court, this decision is perfectly compatible with Oakeshott's understanding of the practice of adjudication, in which the meaning of law is decided by reference to a given situation. Consider, however, the difficulty, well documented in the debates on euthanasia, of any attempt to 'civilize' such 'acts of love and compassion' by turning them into a civil *rule*.
25. Cf.: Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.
26. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*: 158.
27. Ibid.: 163, 159.
28. Ibid.: 161.
29. Nancy, *The Sense of the World*: 108.
30. Agamben, *Means Without Ends: Notes On Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 111–12.

8 Epilogue

1. C. Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice: International Political Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002): 57.
2. Ricoeur, 'The Power of Speech: Science and Poetry', *Philosophy Today*, 1985, 29: 69.
3. Gadamer, 'The Idea of the University – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow', in D. Misgeld and G. Nicholson (eds) *Applied Hermeneutics: Hans Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992): 47–59.

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